

**THE END
of a
THOUSAND
YEARS**

**THE RECENT
EXODUS
of the JEWS
from POLAND**

Compiled and Edited by
ITCHE GOLDBERG and YURI SUHL

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The Recent Exodus of the Jews from Poland

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Itche Goldberg and Yuri Suhl

Committee for Jews of Poland
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Preface

It is one of the sad and tragic ironies of our time that while Poland was commemorating the 25th anniversary of her liberation from German occupation, most of her small remnant of Polish Jews, all survivors of the Hitler holocaust, were once again on the move, exiled from their homeland. Thus Poland achieved the shameful distinction of being the only country since World War II to bring about a mass exodus of its Jewish population.

It was Wladyslaw Gomulka himself, the then General Secretary of the Polish Communist Party (Polish United Workers Party), who triggered the anti-Semitic campaign with his outrageous charges that the Jewish community of Poland was harboring a "fifth column" in its midst. This was the signal for an unprecedented outpouring of anti-Jewish slanders and vilification from the mass media. Daily, the press, radio and television attacked the Jews of Poland as "Zionists"—traitors and enemies of Poland. Simultaneously, Jews were thrown out of the Communist Party and dismissed from their jobs under the pretext that they were "Zionists."

General Mieczyslaw Moczar, a member of the Politbureau and Minister of the Interior, did not hesitate to repeat the discredited canards from that ancient anti-Semitic forgery, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, that the Jews were aiming at world control: "... the modern means of communication," he wrote in the Warsaw newspaper "Zycie Warszawy" (May 5, 1968), "such as the press, the film, television and literature, all of which are overwhelmingly controlled by the Zionists. . . ."

"Zionists" was, of course, a euphemism for Jews. There were no Zionists, or extremely few, in Poland in 1967-1968. They had emigrated to Israel long ago for the Polish government at that time placed no barriers in the way of emigration. The noted British Marxist, Eric J. Hobsbawm, aptly pointed out in "New Society" (August 28, 1969): "What is happening in Poland is systematic anti-Semitism . . . the argument that it is directed against Zionism will simply not stand up."

What followed was a systematic disappearance of cultural institutions, suspension of publications, closing of Jewish Schools and summer camps—smashing and destroying cultural and communal institutions which had up till then functioned with assistance from the Polish government. Some few organizations, institutions and a weekly newspaper remain serving, as it were, as a facade for an almost completely depleted Jewish community. The forced exodus of Jews, under degrading conditions, reduced the Polish Jewish community to a pitiful shadow of its size and scope 10 years ago. It is estimated that no more than six to eight thousand Jews remained in Poland.

We always believed that socialism and anti-Semitism were incompatible. We still do. We also believe that what we witness today is a betrayal of the principles of socialism by the forces that are supposed to be its most zealous guardians. The events of late in Gdansk and Szczecin substantiate our suspicion that the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland was used to deflect attention of the people from serious economic problems which have since been exposed. It is astounding and painful to see that the old and vicious anti-Semitic stratagem has not run its course. Maybe some day Poland will cleanse itself and will return to genuine socialism. But for the remnant of Polish Jews, most of them survivors of Hitler's ghettos and death camps, it is already too late.

The aim of this pamphlet is to have those most qualified present the facts first-hand and to let the facts speak for themselves.

Itche Goldberg

Yuri Suhl

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Why We Left Poland

by Meier Melman

Four months have passed since we left Poland, and during that time the basic question — why we left Warsaw — has been put to us scores of times.

Despite the fact that generally the causes of our “Exodus from Poland” — I won’t say “Expulsion” — are well-known, those who ask the question nevertheless think that there were *individual*, personal reasons. Yes, objective conditions determine an individual’s decision, but he usually has his personal reasons, too.

Up until now my answer was: Our emigration from Poland is primarily a question of human and Jewish dignity.

And if someone should ask whether this can be sufficient reason for a decision which changes a way of life, which forces one to leave everything — home and habits, and at our age, then the answer is — yes. There is a word, imponderable — meaning that which does not permit itself to be weighed and measured, but which nevertheless possesses moral weight and measure that go far beyond material calculations.

Personally, subjectively, nothing touched us. Still . . . there was a whole chain of events resulting from the Six Day War. But may one really say that historical turns begin on a certain day?

Links of this chain had already begun to appear in 1956, when it seemed that the Polish United Workers Party was experiencing a great renewal. Simultaneously with this renewal

MEIER MELMAN, Mr. Melman was a leading actor in the Jewish State Theatre of Poland of which his wife, the internationally known stage and screen star, Ida Kaminska, was the director. He left Poland and now resides in New York.

there began an internal struggle in the Party which continually took on new forms and went "under the name" of other theses. First the conservative Natalin group against "the others" who led the renewal. Later the "Partisans" against the "others."

The Partisans argued that while they fought in the underground, others sat in Moscow under Stalin's wing and played politics, and later returned to liberated Poland and took over complete power. The "others," however, were always associated with Communists of Jewish origin. And so it went, until recent days when the Partisans extended their influence in the Party and embraced as their satellites former leading anti-Semites like Piasecki.

Gomulka, the leader of the Party, had always followed a tactic of maneuvering, of balancing between both sides — until the arrival of the year 1967. Not knowing the situation in the Mideast too well, and keeping strictly within the framework of Soviet foreign policy, he made his famous anti-Israel speech on June 19, 1967 based on a history of the Jewish state as interpreted by — the Arab embassy.

His mouth frothing with emotion (although he read his speech), he averred that he would not tolerate a "Fifth Column" in Poland, (as if there were a direct threat to Poland). He added a reference to "those who arrange parties in celebration of Israel's victory" — by which he meant none other than high government officials. The conclusion of his talk was: There can be no dual loyalties. Whoever doesn't like it, can leave the country. (Naturally, he meant the Jews).

The Partisans were ecstatic. Their strength grew. The pebble tossed into the water could no longer be fished out, even by the wise men of the Party. Then came the double-talk about having meant the "Zionists" (the average person equated that with Jews), but also, the second danger, the revisionists. The words tossed down from above landed among the masses in a grotesque deformation.

The economic situation in the country was very difficult, so it was clear that the Jews were to blame for it all. People who remembered their old anti-Semitism, when they still belonged to the Polish fascists and not the Polish Workers Party,

allowed themselves, even at Party meetings, to add the interpretation that Jews had always been Poland's misfortune. The adding of brains went even further among the politically naive, who offered still another interpretation: "They brought us Bolshevism and now — Zionism." Others said — "First socialism, now revisionism."

To the credit of the older workers, those who even before the war had belonged to workers parties, it should be said that they rejected this ridiculous talk in disgust.

That is really a separate chapter, "revisionism" — a trend which began in Poland in 1956 and was choked off. The healthy desire to renovate the dogmatic approach to socialism, to create a synthesis of socialism and humanism, found expression in 1968 in the Czechoslovak republic. Here, too, apparently, it was the fault of the "Zionists," a sort of mystical fusion of Zionism and revisionism.

It would be bizarre, perhaps, if it weren't so tragic. . . .

The student events in Poland, in March, 1967, were the expression of a young generation which demanded a path to socialism similar to that taken by the Czechs. Among tens of thousands of Polish young people there were perhaps a hundred Jewish students. But all the fury of the authorities came down upon the heads of the Jewish students: "They are the bearers of revisionism under the influence of Zionism."

Indeed, this was expressed in the speech of the Party chief himself. In the big hall of the Palace of Culture more than 3,000 activists were assembled. When the chief said: "Whoever doesn't like it can leave," there was pandemonium in the hall. Cries of "But immediately!" and "Give it to them, Wieslaw!"

All this created the atmosphere in which Jews were dismissed from posts — mostly people who had contributed greatly to the progress of the institutions in which they worked. There were numerous painful incidents which would have been laughable if they had not been so sad.

In certain cities old, pensioned Party members were summoned to Party offices and told that they were Zionists in disguise and that their pensions were being stopped at once.

At a meeting of a Party organization in the television indus-

try a well-known author and director was questioned as to why he, born and raised in Switzerland, had come to Poland. (The son of a Communist, and a convinced Communist himself, he had come to Poland to work.) Then followed the accusation that he was of Jewish descent. "Fascists!" he cried out in contempt and left, and kept on going until he was out of Poland.

One man, who held the position of vice-minister, was accused of having held a party in his house on the 10th of June, obviously to celebrate Israel's victory. Yes, it was a fact, his son had graduated from the university on that day, and his friends, Polish as well as Jewish, had gathered to drink a toast. . . .

At one Party meeting a member who worked in an office "came forward" and related how on "that" day the director of the institution had awarded a medal to an employee, a Jew. This was a sure way of celebrating the day. Naturally, the "guilty" parties were dismissed from their jobs and expelled from the Party.

There were many tragi-comic incidents. An employee — a Pole for generations — is accused of hiding his ancestry, which is contrary to Party ethics. The suspect produces his genealogical record to prove that he stems directly from Polish nobility dating back to the 16th century. The dignified Pole, as he showed the documents, also put down his Party card, with these words:

"To a Party, which still investigates the ancestry of its members, I do not wish to belong!"

A history professor states in a circle of his friends that, when the Frankists in Poland converted to Christianity in the 18th century, they were all given the title of "nobleman." They were never persecuted, and from such Frankists on the maternal side stems the greatest of Poland's poets, Adam Mickiewicz. Today, evidently, the professor says, it is not enough to accept a social faith and help to build a new social order.

Generally speaking, we should not condemn the entire Polish intelligentsia for this insanity. I daresay the majority of them feel ashamed of what happened.

A professor at the University of Cracow, saying goodbye to me, said: "Your protest is a dignified one. You could not have

done otherwise. It is only painful for us that in your emigration we see the end of Jewry in Poland. And good or bad, still, we lived together for a thousand years."

A high government official said: "We ourselves are guilty. We are cowards who are concerned about our homes and don't have the strength to oppose the insanity."

We received a letter from one of the greatest artists in Poland, in which he wrote: "We will not come to say goodbye. We are ashamed. It is painful. We respect your decision."

Let us recall several specifically Jewish matters. When it was demanded of the Yiddish newspaper and publishing houses that they must submit everything before publication in a word-for-word translation, this meant that there was *no one* in the country who could be trusted to censor Jewish publications.

When a campaign of falsehoods is conducted against Joint, which contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for Jewish cultural purposes and constructive help — a campaign accusing Joint of being an agency of imperialism, and alleging that every Jew received thousands of dollars from that organization, and that everyone who emigrates from Poland receives 5,000 dollars in Vienna — well, how can you characterize this?

Some people ask: "Why didn't you leave years ago?" Sometimes this is asked in a tone of irony, sometimes in a "we-knew-it-all-the-time" tone.

Yes, tens of thousands of Jews emigrated from Poland to Israel and other countries immediately after the wars. And probably, from a personal standpoint, they acted wisely.

But there were also people who, with the purest of intentions, wanted to build a new Jewish culture on the ruins of the thousand-year-old Jewish community, a culture which would be a memorial for the once great Polish Jewry. There were favorable circumstances for this right from the beginning, after the liberation of Poland from Hitlerism. And we saw the fruits of it — the Jewish Historical Institute, the Yiddish Theater, the Yiddish publishing houses.

It appeared that the thread of Polish Jewry could be further spun from the Council of the Four Lands, to the freedom fighters in the days of Kosciuszko, to the great galaxy of which I. L. Peretz

was the standard-bearer, to the great Yiddish cultural revival in the years before the war.

The attachment of Polish Jewry to Poland could be seen also in Polish culture. Before the rebellion of 1863, Rabbi Ber Meisel led a Jewish demonstration in the streets of Warsaw against the Czar. My own grandfather took part in the rebellion. It's not to be wondered at, that we were bound by so many strands to the city of the heroic Ghetto Uprising.

Side by side with the traditional sympathy of every Polish Jew for Israel went an attachment to the country where his fathers lived for the past hundreds of years.

And yet there came a time when the harmony between Jewish national life and grey reality was shattered and then disappeared. Evidence? The *Folkshtimme* became a weekly; the Jewish Historical Institute began to vegetate; the publishing house is on its deathbed; the Yiddish theater — which is supposed to be a testimony that there is no anti-Semitism — already has almost no audience at all. There is plenty of evidence.

Let no one wonder, therefore, why we had faith before, while there were logically understood and objective conditions for a rebuilding of Jewish culture. And let no one judge what happened when we were painfully disappointed; the result of shattered belief was the exodus.

Because, how can you — if you have even a little human and Jewish dignity in you — how can you swallow all of this even if it doesn't touch you directly? If we could at least have protested, or even openly discussed these things and exposed the lies and the absurdities — it might have been easier. We could at least have struggled, put up resistance.

Therefore, perhaps, it will become clear what drives people who have a sensitivity to wrongs committed against innocent people — and who cannot reply with dignity — to choose emigration instead of passivity, which could be interpreted as concurrence with everything going on around one.

What's Going on in Poland?

by Israel Felhandler

What's going on in Poland? What are the reasons for the organized anti-Semitic agitation?

These and similar questions are being put to hundreds of Jews who have already left their homeland. With concern and incredulity the question is asked: Is such a thing possible in a Communist country?

The Polish United Workers Party (PZPR) and the Polish People's government deny the existence of official anti-Semitism. They assert that a struggle is being waged against Zionism, against the aggressive policies of the Israeli government vis-a-vis the progressive Arab countries; that the Zionists abroad are baiting Poland; and that this is creating anti-Jewish feelings inside the country.

How does this official denial measure up to the reality of 1967-68?

Jewish cultural and communal life in Poland up to 1967 is well known abroad. The Jewish community in People's Democratic Poland was in many respects a model of activity and vitality, and brought much honor to the Polish government. Hundreds, thousands of Jews in various countries blessed the leaders of the Polish United Workers Party and of the People's government.

What is left today of this creative, active community? Who

ISRAEL FELHANDLER, a native of Poland. Mr. Felhandler was a Jewish teacher. After the war he was a member of the Education Department of the Cultural and Communal Council of the Jews of Poland. He edited several text books for the Jewish State Schools of Poland and was in charge of Youth Activities in the schools and summer camps. He left Poland in 1969 and now resides in Israel.

destroyed it? Who liquidated the Jewish state schools, the children's and youth clubs, the summer camps, the Jewish student club "Babel"? And for what reasons? Did these institutions perhaps threaten the existence of the government?

Who were the authors of the official government document in 1967 which declared Yiddish to be a foreign language in Poland? What connection has that document with the struggle against Zionism? For what reasons did the publishing house Yiddish Buch stop its activity? Was the publication of the works of Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, I. L. Peretz, or the literature of the Holocaust and the Resistance—was this a hindrance to the government's struggle against the aggressive policies of Israel?

What are the real reasons for suspending publication of the monthly periodical *Yiddishe Shriftn*? Why was the organized Jewish community not permitted to observe the 25th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising? How can one justify liquidation of the recently-built Jewish old-age home in Warsaw? Did the old people in that institution have anything to do with student unrest?

To what state has the Cultural-Social Association of the Jews in Poland been reduced by administrative action? Was that institution also an agent of "international Zionism"? What government interests were being menaced by the Jewish cooperatives, so that they had to be disbanded? How is one to understand a political solution of the Jewish problem in Poland which directs the emigration of Jews exclusively to Israel?

It is a fact. No official denials can revive that which was destroyed: the splendid structure which was built by the effort of thousands of cultural and communal workers and with the express agreement and approval of the Party and the government. That structure now lies in ruins. The Jewish community in Poland is now living through its most tragic and final stage.

Most certainly, what is needed is a clear, all-embracing analysis of the socio-political factors, internal and external, which caused the Polish People's government to abandon its internationalist principles, and which led to the destruction of

the hopes of so many Jewish fighters for social and national liberation.

First of all, let the facts speak. We begin with the Jewish school system. As far back as 1964, and even before, there were in the leadership of the Party (not in the Ministry of Education) clear tendencies toward limiting the national character of the Jewish government schools. A plan was worked out to eliminate Jewish history as an independent subject and in its place to introduce "selected themes" in general history. Even the title "Jewish History" was to be abolished.

In 1966, the Ministry of Education began to put this plan into effect. The Executive Committee of the Cultural-Social Association decisively rejected this anti-educational proposal. It was shown that the previous program had been officially approved by the Ministry of Education and never questioned by any competent bodies. It was further demonstrated that Jewish history had been taught against a background of general history; that the connection between Jewish history and the history of Poland had been carefully taught; and that the progressive tendencies in the history of the Jewish people had always been emphasized.

The teachers in the Jewish schools attempted at various conferences to oppose the new regulation. They insisted that this approach would falsify Jewish history; that the students would not understand why they were being deprived of their right and their wish to become more familiar with the history of their people in 1967-68. The parents discussed this plan in dismay. Nevertheless, the study of Jewish history dropped out of the curriculum and the school.

This particular action must be seen as the start of the liquidation of the Jewish government schools. The same forces, which before 1967 had begun to undermine the existence of the Jewish school system, carried out their plan unhindered during the recent events in Poland.

Another fact: on September 4, 1967, opening day of the new school year after the summer vacation, the children of the Sholem Aleichem School in Wroclaw came joyfully to school to meet their new teacher and their friends. They had no idea of

the surprise awaiting them: the sign on the school building had been taken down, and the school was full of hundreds of new Polish students.

The explanation given was that the Jewish school had been closed down, and the building would now be used as a general Polish school which the Jewish children, too, would attend. This move created panic among the parents, teachers, and students. The news spread quickly and aroused angry protest among the Jewish population, and not only in Wroclaw. The whole business had been kept secret from the Cultural-Social Association, from the parents and from the teachers.

As a result of representations made to the Central Committee of the Party, the regional committee of the Party in Wroclaw was ordered to rescind its action and revert to the situation prior to September 4, that is, to reopen the Jewish school. But this had no practical effect, since it had to be carried out by persons whose purpose was dishonest to begin with.

The attempt to reopen the school created a situation which could only stir up bad feelings. The Cultural-Social Association then came forward with concrete proposals to resolve these newly-created problems to the benefit of the Jewish school and the Polish school. But the local organs of authority (with Pilotowsky and Surowy at their head) demonstrated ill-will and persisted in their efforts to liquidate the Jewish school.

It is worth recalling that Andrzej Werblan, the head of the Department of Science and Education in the Party Central Committee, refused to receive a delegation from the Jewish Cultural-Social Association to discuss the above situation. However, Minister Henryk Jablonski did receive a delegation of the Association and gave them his personal promise to intervene. As it turned out, the minister proved too ineffectual to save either the school or his own prestige.

The dispute over the school stretched out for months, and after the March 1968 events, when the Polish press accused the school of "Zionism and nationalism," etc., it suffered the same fate as all the Jewish schools.

As the same time the National Council in Lodz adopted an official decision to close the local Jewish school. The National

Council in Stettin had been attacking the Jewish school for years, resulting in an enrollment of fewer than 20 students. The school in Liegnitz was quietly closed.

In summary: the school in Lodz, with more than 50 students, now leads a precarious existence. Only remnants of the school in Wroclaw remain, without prospect of future existence. And if, at the present moment, these "remnants" still remain, it is only thanks to the protests abroad against the anti-Semitic campaign. In June, 1968, the Polish government retreated somewhat in order to create illusions abroad that Jewish institutions still existed.

No one, however, can deny the facts cited above, as well as the fact that the government publishing house for school texts has totally halted activity in the Jewish field. There is simply no one for whom to print the books. The whole atmosphere is such that Jewish schools, like other institutions, are being stifled even without official decrees, let alone those against which such decrees have been issued.

During the last ten years, up to the Six Day War, educational activity among Jewish youth blossomed. The results were significant. Representatives of the Party and the government valued this achievement highly and praised it publicly. But as soon as the Arab nations lost the war, everything suddenly changed. Jewish Communist education was officially forbidden, paradoxical as this may sound.

Looking back a decade, our evaluation of the situation today is fortified. Isolated acts of hostility on the part of the government toward the Cultural-Social Association in the early 1960's expose the roots of the tragic chapter of 1967-68. These were concrete indications that in "higher circles" there were followers of a peculiar "school of thought" on the Jewish question. But at that time the arms of these people were too short. They were merely waiting for the right moment. Their aim was gradually to diminish and restrict Jewish activity. And they tried even then by various means to carry out their plan, at least in part.

They tried to gain their ends by decreasing the funds which the Joint Distribution Committee had been sending to Poland. The aim was not to liquidate "Joint" itself, nor to reduce the

general Joint funds, but to change allocations so as to restrict activity of the Cultural-Social Association, and primarily its work among Jewish youth, for which not one groschen was assigned in the government budget. This work was supported exclusively by Joint funds.

Up to 1967 these attempts failed.

The undisguised policy of destruction began when the Arab governments lost the war. In the first months (actually from June 1967 to March 1968), those with designs on Jewish Institutions continued to keep up appearances. They made efforts to persuade people that it was only a matter of eliminating "Jewish privileges." They actually used this trick to liquidate Joint in Poland in 1967, at the same time issuing pious assurances that the government and the Party had only the interests of the Cultural-Social Association and its institutions at heart.

And as a sign of the good will and the uprightness of the government they offered to work out a new budget for the Association for 1968, which would also include education of children and youth. When the new budget was submitted to the authorities for approval in November, 1967, they clearly and firmly declared, in the name of the Party and the government, that the Cultural-Social Association of the Jews in Poland was forbidden to educate children up to the age of 18!

Moreover, it was clearly spelled out at that time that previous activity in this field had been "illegal." This was said in face of the fact that the program of the children's and youth clubs and summer camps had always been worked out in conformity with the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and the legal status of the Cultural-Social Association and approved by the appropriate government officials.

Along with the ban on activity among children, the Cultural-Social Association budget was reduced to the point where there was barely enough for administrative expenses. The government order also forbade the organization of Yiddish courses and summer camps. A most bizarre reason was given for this: Jewish children spending their summer vacation together constituted a serious political error, nay, even a threat to the government.

It sounds silly, but it's true; it defies logic, and at the same time it is tragic. This act robbed the Jewish population of its right to educate its children on foundations acceptable to a socialist government. It robbed the children of their happiness, of the opportunity to meet with friends, to learn the Yiddish alphabet, to sing a Yiddish song, to hear a Yiddish story, even to become acquainted with the history of the Jews in Poland.

It put an end to a rich creative process in which educators, poets, directors, choreographers, participated. *All children's and youth clubs were shut down.* The two outstanding youth ensembles of Lodz and Liegnitz were liquidated. These groups were the crown of the amateur artistic movement among the youth. On their visits to France and Belgium they distinguished themselves with their unique interpretation of Yiddish folksongs and folk traditions.

This wanton decision dissolved hopes for creating enduring Jewish cultural values on Polish soil. The only consolation was that the seeds of this culture had been planted in the minds and hearts of the Jewish young people.

During the March, 1968 events, the Babel Club of the Cultural-Social Association became one of the most talked-about subjects in the Polish press, on radio and television, and at Party meetings. Senseless accusations and insinuations were made, as well as an attempt to connect the Babel Club with the student disturbances. In order to make this seem plausible, the date of the founding of the Club was falsified. Names of arrested students who allegedly were active in the Club were publicized. The work of the Club was described in a way that distorted its cultural and educational purpose.

But no doubt remained about its "true character"—an out-and-out exclusive club for the pampered sons of the rich, who all wore "Western clothes." (As if Western fashions had no influence on Polish youth, but only on Jews.)

At a meeting of the editorial board of *Zolnierz Wolnosci* called to discuss ideological subversion against the Polish government, the activity of the Babel Club was treated from that viewpoint. The Jewish community was accused of playing "a perfidious game" because Polish students were also members of

that Club. Honest internationalist activity, true Polish-Jewish brotherhood, especially among the youth, was interpreted as a "perfidious game"! The Warsaw Party committee even issued a special brochure aimed at alerting the party membership to the harmfulness of the Babel Club.

The drive to "popularize" the Club was so great that they wanted to photograph its meeting-place on Nowogrodzka Street. They needed visible material for television, the better to enlighten the viewer. Attempts to respond to the charges, to explain, to publish articles and documents presenting the true situation, remained only a wish.

A request to the Warsaw mid-city Party Committee thoroughly to investigate the situation met incomprehensible indifference. The false accusations hit hard those parents whose sons and daughters were members of the Babel Club. Such parenthood was sufficient reason for expulsion from the Party and dismissal from jobs. The campaign also caused Polish students to suffer because they achieved a truthful socialist education, because they spent time with their Jewish friends, learned to love Jewish folklore, the Yiddish song. These, apparently, are serious crimes. It grieves me deeply to write these words.

During the period of the open anti-Semitic agitation, the Jewish Historical Institute was subjected to ugly attacks in the press, on radio and television. The insinuations and accusations were fabricated in the headquarters which organized and conducted the anti-Jewish campaign, and were presented in such a way as to lead to acceptance of them as authoritative.

At the same time, the Institute received letters from the government aimed at disintegrating the work of the Institute by placing far-reaching restrictions on its scholarly work. The researchers in the Institute refused to cooperate in this liquidation, and most of its workers left Poland. The recent news that Dr. Datner was appointed Director of the Institute is only an ornament concealing the true course of events—to show the world that the "anti-Zionist struggle" had a purpose and that now everything is in order again.

The Jewish old-age home for 150 persons was built in recent years with funds supplied by Joint. It was then decided, based

on an exchange of correspondence between the Cultural-Social Association and the Ministry of Health, that the home would be under jurisdiction of the Warsaw National Council, with the understanding that its character as a Jewish institution would be maintained, and that applicants would be accepted in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Association. It was also understood that the material aid for the old people and for maintaining the home would be continued. Until the summer of 1968, this practice was carried out in strict accord with the above agreement.

But after the March events the old-age home, too, fell victim to the provocations leading to liquidation of all Jewish institutions. A letter from the Warsaw National Council informed the Executive Committee that since a law in Warsaw restricted new residence permits for citizens from the provinces, Jewish old people would not be permitted to come to live in the home.

A delegation of the Executive Committee visited the National Council and the Department of Health, and exposed the absurdity of the argument: the law pertains primarily to people who must be provided with apartments. Here the law did not apply in this case since these Jewish old people had their own building. The delegation was shunted to other government offices. The Executive Committee then appealed to the Ministry of Health and received the same reply. In the meantime, scores of Poles had been sent into the home and the agreement between the Ministry of Health and the Executive Committee was thereby cancelled. In this way the old people were punished for the so-called sins of the Jewish students.

"Down with privileges for Jews!" The desire of aged Jews for their own little corner, for their own environment, was interpreted as nationalism, as separatism. On the one hand, the Jewish community was accused of trying to cover up its harmful nationalistic Zionist activity by including Polish youth and students in its educational work. On the other hand, the national character of the old age home was "evaluated" as a harmful anti-government phenomenon. (For the record, it should be noted that during its existence the home had accepted Poles.)

This act was carried out at a time when the highest Party

and government authorities knew that the home had been built with Jewish funds from abroad. Was this lawless act, too, part of the "struggle against Zionism"? In this, as in similar cases, the Jewish Cultural-Social Association was helpless.

The Association is now completely paralyzed politically and socially. The Presidium resigned in March and April. This was duly noted by the Central Committee of the Party. The active center was politically and organizationally smashed. A number of prominent community workers have left Poland. A large number of active people were expelled from the Party. The accusations against the Association were base fabrications from start to finish.

The day after a television program accusing the Association not only of political sins but of squandering public funds, a special control commission descended on Novogrodzka #5. For three months this commission investigated the documents and records of the Joint—despite the fact that the institution had already been liquidated. The report of this control commission was never given to the Association. Immediately after the commission ended its work, a second control commission was sent by the National Council with a very modest task: to prove that the Association owed the government treasury 30 to 40 million zlotys. This was a portent of the dim prospects of the new building for the Yiddish theater and the cooperatives, which had cost about 40 million zlotys (of Joint funds).

When the Association decided to reply without aggressive intent to the accusatory (the Hertz) article in *Slowo Powszechne*, (organ of the notorious anti-Semite Piasecki and other former Endeks), they were forbidden to do so. Letters about the situation went to Gomulka and Kliszko, but were not answered. The Association was totally removed from political activity. It was completely excluded from participating in preparations for the Fifth Party Congress.

The Warsaw section of the Association ended its activity. Local associations now are limited to keeping their buildings open for card and checker games. The Esther Rachel Kaminska Theater in Wroclaw was forcibly taken over, and this was accompanied by scurrilous articles against the Association and its

activities. They were called "Kamieniczniki"—owners of buildings. On the day of Wroclaw's liberation from Nazi rule a Polish newspaper in Wroclaw wrote that the Polish people were being given a gift on that day of victory over Hitler, the day of liberation, the theater building named for Esther Rachel Kaminska.

The Jewish cooperatives have been liquidated as Jewish economic institutions—and they had been established by a specific decision of the Central Committee of PZPR. The cooperatives were an important social and financial base for the Cultural-Social Association.

The budget of the Association was cut to the bare minimum. There is hardly enough for administrative expenses and pensions for a few officials. At the present moment the Association exists only "for show." It is not in a position to conduct any serious cultural or political activity. The situation of the Association becomes even clearer when one notes that the Jewish religious congregation was not touched in the least during the anti-Jewish campaign, although it still receives the same amount of money from Joint as always. Joint was liquidated and treated as a harmful foreign organization only in its relation to the Cultural-Social Association. It is proper however, for the purposes of the religious Jews. Down with secularism among the Jews in Socialist countries. This is a way of saying officially that Jews may be recognized *only* as a religious minority.

During the final months of 1967 the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Association worked out a program for the Warsaw Ghetto commemoration in conjunction with the "Association of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy" (ZBOWID), which is headed by Moczar. The program was basically approved by the official Party authorities. The commemorations were to have been organized throughout the country in cooperation with ZBOWID, as in previous years.

After the March events, and even earlier, ZBOVID began to obstruct the promised cooperation. It was obviously improper to carry out a commemoration program with a tainted Jewish organization.

The commemoration in Warsaw took place without the participation of the Jewish Cultural-Social Association. It officially

did not even receive admission tickets. During the laying of the wreaths all Jewish organizations were segregated — a new ghetto.

Hundreds of Jews boycotted both the commemorative and the wreath-laying ceremony. Hundreds of young people came to the memorial in the evening to place their wreaths. On the other hand, the authorities made a big to-do about the foreign delegations allowed to come into the country.

The same story was repeated during the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Bialystok ghetto uprising. It was simply a profanation of the most sacred and intimate feelings of thousands of Jews in Poland. Moczar and Rusinek have taken over the traditions of the heroes of the Warsaw and Bialystok ghettos! That's what is known as "the irony of fate." They desecrate the memory of Joseph Levartovski and Mordecai Anielewitch.

At the same time as the ghetto commemorations, the Jewish pavillion in Auschwitz was opened. Jewish delegations from abroad were invited. The representatives of the Association refused to participate unless they were treated as an official delegation. In order not to "spoil the impression" on the Jews from abroad, this demand of the Association was met. *The Jews of Poland have now begun to live at the mercy of external factors.*

Permission granted to Jews to leave Poland must be considered from two points of view. For those Jews for whom living in Poland has become physically and spiritually intolerable, the opportunity to leave Poland is a "positive" phenomenon. At the same time, one can only conclude from the atmosphere surrounding those who leave Poland that *Jews have received the right to emigrate because they have been placed outside the law, because they are being treated as citizens of the lowest class.*

Jews do not receive ordinary foreign passports. So-called "travel documents" are issued which no government in the world, except Israel, will officially honor. This "travel document" expressly states: "The person named in this travel document is not a Polish citizen."

When one applies for permission to emigrate one must specify "Israel" as destination and must simultaneously renounce his

Polish citizenship. In cases where families have asked for permission to emigrate to other countries to join their children, and have produced the necessary documents from their children, permission has been categorically denied. All efforts to reverse such decisions have proved fruitless. One must renounce his Polish citizenship and go to Israel—that is a consistent "socialist and democratic" policy toward citizens of the country!

One family applied for an exit visa and had not received it after a long time. When they inquired the reason for the delays, they were very plainly told: "So long as your daughter, who was studying abroad, does not give up her Polish citizenship, she will not get permission to emigrate." By what name can you call this kind of treatment?

It is well known, after all, that the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party as such adopted a special decision concerning the present emigration of Jews. *This is not an error of one or another official.* It is not the mistaken tactic of this or that institution. It is the policy of the government, of the Party. The present emigration of the Jews from Poland is an undeniable political emigration. It bears all the marks of outright discrimination.

As tragic and humiliating as this treatment is, the Jews still live with a worse fear: "Maybe they will stop granting permission to leave Poland?"

A terrible storm swept through Poland in 1967-68. One consequence is that the Jewish community has ended its thousand-year history on Polish soil.

How the Jewish Community in Poland was Ruined

by Yudel Korman

What were the effects of the campaign of incitement against "Zionism" in Poland in 1968?

Of course, when 75 percent of the leading activists in the Jewish community left the country or withdrew from activity, when thousands of Jews felt compelled to leave Poland, it was obvious that this would automatically affect the entire social and cultural work carried on among the Jewish population and weaken the activity in all the existing cultural institutions. However, this did not proceed so simply, so automatically as some may imagine. The fact is, and this needs to be stressed, that the leading activists and the largest section of the Jewish population did not hastily or lightly decide to leave the country.

For the sake of the record it must be noted that for many months the Presidium of the Association made strenuous representations to have the campaign of incitement stopped. It addressed letters to the leadership of the Party, knocked at the doors of the leaders of the Party and of the government, attempted to explain and to warn of the consequences. A section of the Presidium even took the obsequious step of publishing on

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behalf of the entire Jewish communal leadership a document which will remain a stigma upon the until then bold and courageous Jewish community in Poland. (This document conceded that Israel acted as an "aggressor" in the June 1967 war.) All this was to no avail. The campaign of incitement persisted and even intensified.

The Polish public was flooded with the pamphlets of the Walichnowskis, Krasickis and others. Every day the newspapers were filled with the most outrageous libels against Jews in general and the leaders of the Jewish institutions in particular. The radio and television, for example, would inform the listeners and viewers many times a day that every Jew in Poland had received five thousand dollars a year from the Joint Distribution Committee (and, of course, the Joint doesn't hand out money for nothing in return).

The leaders of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, it was alleged, had for years conducted illegal trade by bringing into the country, with the aid of the Joint for its own cooperatives, various raw materials (furs, plastics, etc.), and swindled the customs office of many millions of zlotys. When the leadership of the Association and the Editorial Staff of the *Folks-Shtimme* sought to register their denial of the disgraceful accusation and explain these matters truthfully, they were prohibited from doing so. Under these conditions, all the efforts of the leadership of the Association to maintain and further develop its cultural and social functions came to a dead end. The Jews became frightened of the Association and its activists. In a number of Party organizations in Warsaw and in the provinces it was enough for any hooligan to accuse a Jewish Party member of being a member of the Association for the latter to be labeled "an agent of imperialism." Such a charge sufficed for the majority of those assembled to exclude this person from the Party.

In many cities various members of the Association were summoned to the security organs, where they were interrogated for hours: what do you do in the Association, how did you happen to belong to it, what is discussed there, and did they really have a celebration for Israel's victory? As this procedure

continued, other Jews became fearful. They became frightened and very disheartened. They stopped coming to the club of the Association and began to avoid one another. To attend Association functions meant to go to a suspected place and could lead to the charge of being a "spy," "an agent of imperialism."

In such an atmosphere, and despite the exertions of many leading people, the sections of the Association began to languish. They slowly stopped every activity. To call meetings, to organize lectures or reading circles or other functions for which the Association was so famed before, meant to invite dangers and, above all, certain failure, since Jews were afraid to come to the Association which was now viewed as a subversive, anti-government organization. Under these conditions, a large number of Jews and among them a major part of the membership of the Association felt compelled to leave the country.

May I here be permitted to pause and attempt to clarify the words, "they felt compelled to leave." It is obvious that for the most part this was a matter of moral compulsion. Here were people who had devoted their entire lives to the revolutionary workers' movement, some of them had spent their best years in the pre-war Pilsudski jails for Communist activity. Now along comes a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (A. Werblan) and seeks to prove in a lengthy "theoretical treatise" that they, the Jews, ruined the Communist Party of Poland and, in general, there were too many Jews in it. Then along comes the former chief of the anti-Semites in pre-war Poland, Boleslaw Piasecki, and publicly accuses these veteran revolutionary Jewish worker activists of being spies, agents and what not.

Nor was the campaign only a matter of speech and writing, only of "theoretical" concepts. All this was accompanied by deeds. These vilified people were frequently and in a brutal manner thrown out of the Party and their jobs, spat upon and insulted on all sides. Is this not sufficient to force a person who wishes to maintain his human dignity to depart?

This attack was not only directed against persons, against leading activists and members of the Association; it also struck the Jewish cultural institutions. It proceeded according to a

prearranged plan on all fronts, on the political, cultural, and social life of the Jewish community in Poland.

How did it work out in practice?

Let us examine the Association itself and its 27 sections. The Association was prohibited from engaging in any type of social welfare activity. The Jewish Old Age Home in Warsaw, which was set up with funds provided by the Joint Distribution Committee, was completely removed from the Association's supervision. The occupational training courses, conducted by the ORT, were liquidated. The Social Assistance Commissions were dissolved. The youth and children's clubs were closed down. The song and dance ensembles were dissolved. In the summer of 1968, the Association was forbidden to organize summer camps for the Jewish children. For a period of nine months the Presidium of the Association was not allowed to convene a meeting of the leadership.

The Association's budget was so severely cut, that it really became impossible to conduct any activity. As if all this were not enough, one Control Commission after another was installed in the Association's headquarters on Nowogrodzky 5 in Warsaw so as to further intimidate the responsible leaders.

Simultaneously, an attack started on the Jewish schools. The course in Jewish history was prohibited. It was argued that the number of Jewish children was small, and classroom space in Poland was limited. Non-Jewish children must then be allowed to attend the Jewish schools. In this way, of course, the Jewish schools lost their distinctive character and became transformed into general Polish schools.

Let us examine what happened to the principal Yiddish cultural institutions such as the newspaper, *Folks-Shtimme*, the literary monthly, *Yiddishe Shriften*, and the publishing house, Yiddish Buch. It began with an edict against the *Folks-Shtimme* requiring the editorial staff to submit to the censor a Polish translation of the entire edition of each issue. For a newspaper published four times weekly this was physically impossible to accomplish. In addition, and this is most important, this edict was a gross insult to the editorial staff, to the Jewish public, and to our Yiddish language. Such discrimination against our

Yiddish language was unknown in semi-fascist Poland and not even in czarist Russia was it practiced.

Was there not a Jewish censor in whom they had confidence? No! Surely more than one could have been found. What was involved here was the imposition of humiliating discrimination against Yiddish, the Jewish cultural workers, and the editors. The authorities thus sought to demonstrate to people who were Party members for many years, that not the least trust was placed in them any longer.

This edict was then extended to include the magazine *Yiddishe Shriften* and the publishing house, Yiddish Buch. Every poem, novel, and short story, every book, even those of the old classical Yiddish writers, had to be presented to the censor in a Polish translation. Naturally, these demands couldn't be met. Well, the *Yiddishe Shriften* and the publishing house were liquidated. The type forms of a few Yiddish books already set up were broken down, among them two books commissioned by foreign writers and paid for with foreign money. The *Folks-Shtimme*, as is known, was changed into a weekly with an anonymous editorial staff, and is now almost completely divested of any Jewish content.

Nor was the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw spared by the vicious campaign of incitement, libels, and discrimination. The associates of the Institute, it was charged, had falsified the history of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April, 1943, and had also transmitted documents to West Germany, particularly excerpts from Ringelblum's diary. According to the version of the "anti-Zionist" incitement, the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto was made primarily by Poles and not by Jews. When the director of the Institute presented an official denial of the charges made against it to the newspapers, it was denied publication.

Neither did this campaign of incitement spare the Jewish State Theater. On a designated day, many newspapers issued a financial accounting of the money the government had put up for every Jew who attended performances of the Jewish Theater Ida Kaminska and other artists were described in an insulting manner. Intimidation was intensified by placing in

both institutions infamous Control Commissions, which through many months virtually terrorized the staff workers.

It must unfortunately be stated that the culturally and socially organized Jewish community in Poland has practically been liquidated. That vibrant, warm place, Nowogrodzka 5, is no more. It is true the present Cultural and Social Association of Jews in Poland has been given an office in a new building on Grzybowski Place. But this is no longer like that Jewish cultural address. The Association has been drained of any connection with progressive Jewish culture.

Those who wrecked and liquidated the creative Jewish community in Poland need to maintain on paper the existence of the Association and of a Yiddish weekly paper so that they can claim, "It is untrue that there is anti-Semitism in Poland. The proof of this is in the Jewish organization and the Yiddish institutions we maintain." Why then do so many Jews, the majority, leave Poland? The answer is, "These are Zionists," "these are alien elements on the Polish body."

Why did this happen? Did it all begin with the Six Day War?

Let me state at once that, generally, I have encountered in various circles the view that the Jews in Poland had disagreed with the policies of the government and the Party in the assessment of the Six Day War, that they probably openly came out against that policy, or that this was presumably the reason for the excesses against the Jews and their cultural organizations.

The truth is, there were diverse views on this question both among Jews and non-Jews in Poland, just as there were varying opinions on the matter among readers of the *Morning Freiheit* in New York, in the entire international labor movement and in the socialist countries.

But even if it were true that all Jews held the same views on the Six Day War, does that justify branding them a "fifth column," agents of imperialism, and throwing them out of their jobs, their Party organizations? Does it justify creating around them an atmosphere that would compel them to flee the country? What actually was the thinking of the Jewish population in Poland before, during, and after the Six Day War?

It is understandable that, in the first days of June, 1967, large numbers, perhaps the greatest part of the Jewish population in Poland, lived in great fear for the fate of their brothers and sisters, for the fate of their kin in Israel. Was this abnormal? Was it a crime on their part to feel this way? Later, when the war broke out and the Polish radio brought news from Cairo every half hour that Tel Aviv, Haifa, and other Israeli cities were in flames — that the Arab armies were advancing from all sides on the territory of Israel — one can understand that the anxiety of the Jews grew stronger, their mood more depressed.

Finally, when it turned out that the news from Cairo was wrong, that the evil dreams of Nasser, Aref and Shukairy were not to be realized, then the Jews, and not only Jews, were jubilant. They were *inwardly glad* that their dear ones had not been driven into the sea and that the threat of world war had been averted for the time being.

I say they were "*inwardly glad*" for it is not true that the Jews openly manifested their joy, danced in the streets — that they drank — that they went in mass delegations with flowers to the Israeli embassy. Nothing like this happened — for various reasons. The primary reason was that such things were utterly impossible under Polish conditions! Let me add, however, that even if all the above *were* true, under no circumstances could there be the slightest justification for unleashing an anti-Semitic orgy in a socialist country, for designating the Jewish population as a "fifth column" imperiling the socialist regime.

The truth is, however, that the events in Poland originated long before the Six Day War. The war served only as a pretext for certain elements that had infiltrated the Party and the ruling organs of the state in order to end the Jewish problem in Poland.

Those in a position to observe at close range the development of events in Poland since the end of World War II could see that in the leadership of the Party and the government a constant struggle between two forces was taking place. This was a struggle between the authors of the July Manifesto of Lublin at the time of the formation of the Polish People's Republic (that is, those who in a Leninist manner sought to solve

the national question generally and the Jewish question in particular) and those forces who, after Hitler had murdered the largest part of the Jewish people, wanted to get rid of the question forever. Consistent with this position, as early as 1945 the anti-Party elements opposed the return to Poland of the approximately 300,000 Polish Jews who had saved themselves in the Soviet Union. When the sound revolutionary forces in the Party emerged victorious, the opposition lost this battle. Yet they continued to do everything possible to help organize, both legally and illegally, the emigration of the returning Polish Jews to the German D.P. camps in order to reduce the size and significance of the Jewish community.

We should not like to reopen the painful wound of the pogrom in Kielce in 1946. But no decent person in Poland ever believed that *all* the sinister forces behind that pogrom were apprehended and punished.

When one examines those events in the light of today — when we see the pre-war pogromist Boleslav Piasecki receiving from the Polish government its highest state award — the problem becomes quite clear.

However, as stated above, the sound forces in the Party triumphed after World War II. Even the reduced Jewish population of some 85,000 souls (at the beginning of 1946 there were in Poland approximately 350,000 Jews) were given every opportunity to develop in the broadest possible way the Jewish cultural and social life appropriate to Polish Jews.

If earlier we dwelt at length on the specific "Polish way" in which Jewish cultural and social life developed, we should add that the other side too, the reactionary forces that in one way or another wormed themselves into the Party leadership and various government organs, also had worked out their special way of trying to liquidate the Jewish community. Since it was not possible for them to operate openly, they went into hiding and patiently waited for better times. They utilized every opportunity, prepared far-reaching plans and various provocations in order to deliver effective blows at the proper time. Thus in 1956, after the sad events in Posen, when the Party and the government faced serious difficulties generally, Zenon Nowak,

then a member of the Polit-Bureau and Vice Premier, submitted the anti-Leninist slogan of instituting a program of "National Cadres." In simple language this meant even then: gradually remove Jewish persons from important and even lesser posts and positions in the Party and state life and replace them with Poles, with "pure Aryans."

To be sure, a large majority of the party leadership rejected this alien, reactionary slogan at that time. Zenon Nowak himself tried to retreat. However, the reactionary forces quickly seized upon that slogan and gradually began putting it into effect — first of all in the lower echelons. This occurred after the shock sustained by the international workers' movement as a result of the disclosures of the crimes committed during the Stalin era. The leadership of the United Polish Workers Party was then much weakened. This was the time of the so-called Polish October that brought Wladyslaw Gomulka to the fore. The reactionaries saw broad possibilities opening up. Under the spurious slogan of struggle against the Stalinists, the anti-Party forces first of all turned against the Jews, drove them out of jobs, out of the Party and in many places even created a pogrom atmosphere (for instance, in Szczecin and Walbrzych). As a consequence of this campaign about two-thirds of the surviving Jews in Poland emigrated within two years.

Let me add at once that even in that difficult period the healthy forces in the Party leadership were still sufficiently strong so that in February, 1957, the Secretariat of the Party addressed a letter to all Party members in which it disapproved and warned against the anti-Semitic phenomena. It then called on the Jewish party members to remain in the country and jointly fight against the reactionary anti-Party forces.

The letter, alas, came a little too late. In a series of regional leadership groups, reactionary elements were able to sabotage the letter. It was thrown into the wastebasket and not even read at Party meetings. Nonetheless, the letter had a positive effect. It persuaded a large number of Jewish people and Jewish Party cadres not to leave Poland. After a short, difficult period the leadership of the Cultural and Social Association recovered and

again began developing its activity in all areas of Jewish cultural and social life.

Although, as stated before, during this period numerous reactionaries and anti-Party elements found their way into various levels of the Party leadership and government officers, they had not yet begun vigorously and openly to attack the small but still very creative Jewish community. Their tactics then were to harass and create difficulties for Jews, yet at the same time appearing to cooperate in developing Jewish cultural activity. Let us try to illustrate this with some examples:

First: Jews who left Poland in the years 1956-58 departed as Polish citizens with Polish emigration passports like all non-Jewish Polish citizens. However, even then the Jews were discriminated against. Non-Jewish Polish citizens who emigrated to America, Australia, or other countries, were always able to return to Poland at any time, if they found that they could not acclimate themselves to the new conditions of life. Jews, on the other hand, who departed at that time could never return to Poland despite the fact that they had Polish passports. In July, 1957, 10,000 Jews with Polish passports were listed at the Polish Consulate in Tel-Aviv as wanting to return. Not one was permitted to re-enter Poland.

Second: Up to the beginning of 1957 the *Folks-Shtimme* in Warsaw had been the newspaper of the Party in the Yiddish language. Its subtitle stated it was an "Organ of the United Polish Workers Party." In the first months of 1957 this was suddenly changed. Orders came to transform the newspaper into the organ of the Cultural and Social Association of the Jews in Poland. The Presidium of the Association and the *Folks-Shtimme* editorial board both protested that this might be wrongly interpreted by the paper's readers. Their protests were disregarded. The order had to be carried out.

Third: Up to the beginning of 1957, the Federation had been under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister. It was from there that it received its budget. It was to that office that the Association submitted its plans of work as well as various proposals. After the "Polish October" the Association was assigned to the Ministry of National Minorities on the basis of an old pre-war

“Sanacja” (Pilsudski) law, according to which national minorities were considered a distrusted element.

This meant that the Association with its widespread activities was suddenly regarded as suspect and under the direct control of the Security organs. From that moment, the “special emissaries” of that body began to attend the sessions of the Presidium of the Association. The budget of the Association was cut and the personnel reduced. Finally, it came to such a pass that the budget was barely enough for administrative expenses. For cultural activity other financial sources had to be found.

Fourth: At some point the government organs of the Katowice region — *again* on the basis of an old “Sanacja” (Pilsudski law known as the “Pistor Law”) — prohibited ritual slaughter. The alarmed representatives of the religious Jews appealed to the Association in Warsaw. The Association leaders knocked on doors all the way up to the Prime Minister, but to no avail. The law remained in force and religious Jews of Katowice and other cities in the region had to obtain kosher meat from Cracow.

Is this all? No! We could cite numerous other examples of how the reactionary elements, especially in the period between the end of 1955 to 1967, did everything they could to disrupt from within and hinder the normal development of the cultural and social life of the tiny Jewish community, encouraging among the handful of surviving Jews in Poland the tendency and desire to flee, to emigrate. Limited space regrettably does not permit that.

But why — some readers may ask — why did we keep silent about all this till now? The truth is we did *not* remain silent. During this period the leading cadres of the Cultural and Social Association of the Jews in Poland conducted a stubborn fight against the reactionary forces in an effort to maintain and further extend our Jewish cultural and social life. True, we did not always succeed. Generally speaking, however, we succeeded, thanks to the sound forces in the party leadership, in maintaining and developing our creative Jewish cultural life.

Objective historians of the Jewish community in Poland of its last 25 years will establish beyond all doubt that the last

decade was its most active period, despite the substantially reduced size of the community. The Six Day War served only as a pretext, an opportunity for the reactionary forces — the Moczars, Korczynskis and Werblans, the Piaseckis, Krasickis, Sidors and the rest — completely to liquidate all Jewish life in Poland, to solve the Jewish question once and for all.

By means of numerous provocations, of inciting vicious campaigns, these forces succeeded in further strengthening their power positions. They succeeded in removing the group of Ochab, Rapacki, Albrecht, Sztachelski and others, to neutralize the group of Cyrankiewicz, Jedrychowski and all other healthy Party forces, and even to draw into their game a number of vacillating elements with Gomulka at the head.

No! It was not the Six Day War that was the cause or the origin of the latest tragic events. The war only gave the anti-Jewish, anti-Party elements the opportunity to conclude the treacherous work they had begun in the Kielce period. What conclusions should we draw from this? Of course, there are those who dismiss it all, either joyfully or with sincere regret, with this “argument”: The events in Poland these past two years, they maintain, have conclusively proved that it is not possible to build any progressive Jewish cultural life in the socialist countries. Thus they completely ignore the 23 years of active, creative Jewish cultural life in socialist Poland! Are these 23 years less important than the last two years?

Paul Novick, following his last visit to Poland, wrote an article in the monthly *Idishe Kultur (Jewish Culture)* (April, 1965) under the characteristic title: “The Marvel — Jewish Poland.” In that article he asked: “How explain such a marvel in a community of only 30,000 Jewish souls?” And he answers: “First, a state that renders aid very generously. Second, a large number of active people, of highly qualified activists. Third, traditions, Polish-Jewish traditions of progressive creativity, traditions of the labor and revolutionary movement of the Jews in Poland. Fourth, and the main reason, there is a proper attitude toward the national question, the attitude of the socialist Polish state, the attitude of the Jewish activists.”

Precisely in these words lies the correct conclusion that should be drawn from the events in Poland. As long as the Party, the socialist state, and the Jewish leadership firmly adhere to this position, the Leninist position on the national question, there exist the widest possibilities for the development of progressive Jewish cultural activity, for further forging the golden chain of our continued existence.

However, the moment these principles are violated in one way or another, it will inevitably lead to the catastrophic situation to which the Jewish community in Poland has been reduced. It is this conclusion we must never tire of stressing. No matter how painful it may be, we must, first of all, remind the progressive and revolutionary forces in all countries and the Communist and workers' parties, that the violation of Leninist principles in their application to the national question is not only to the detriment of the Jewish masses and the other national minorities in the respective countries; it is also in the greatest measure harmful to the revolutionary forces generally. And, as in Poland, this violation represents a victory of the reactionary, anti-Communist forces within the Party.

One must not remain silent. One must sound the alarm! This is the only correct conclusion that can be drawn from the events in Poland.

The Expulsion from Poland—1968

by Lili Berger

Expulsion means not only banishment but also robbery. Jews have not been expelled from Poland officially, nor have they been robbed; no one is driving them out of their homes, nor are they being pursued to the borders, as they were during the Middle Ages.

Times change, and so do methods, but the concept remains unaltered.

There is no other name than "expulsion" for the events now taking place in Poland; there is no other description for the feelings of exhausted Jews, survivors of Hitlerite slaughters, who are now forced to take up their walking sticks again.

"Thou shalt not forget!" said an old, broken Jew to me, a man who has labored in the land as a wage earner, and who now, at age 66, robbed of his human rights and the fruits of his labor, must begin a period of wandering on his sick legs. "This must not be forgotten!" said people who have been thrown out of work, who have been insulted and injured, people who miraculously escaped from the death camps a quarter of a century ago and fought in forests and ghettos, and then, with pain and suffering rebuilt their wrecked home, which is now again becoming a mound of ashes.

The fateful sentence did not come about all at once — there is no law on the books to this very day, there is no decree, that the handful of Jews must leave the land of their birth. But, there

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are unwritten laws, which rumble below the surface until they burst forth above with brutality and fury.

Less than a year has passed between June, 1967, when Gomulka openly declared that he would not tolerate a "Fifth Column" in his domain, and the events of March 1968. It is a self-evident truth, therefore, that these unwritten "ukases" were in preparation much earlier, that the evil winds which blew up from time to time from undetermined sources were symptomatic of a groundwork that had been laid far more effectively than had been imagined.

Discriminations and persecutions of one sort or another that Jews have had to endure, and still endure, all of them have one name — anti-Semitism. The Polish rulers have loftily proclaimed that anti-Semitism does not exist in Poland. Apparently, throwing people out of work, removing them from social and cultural life, waging a campaign in the press and on radio and television against evil Jew-Zionists — none of this has an anti-Jewish character. As a proof of Polish virtue, anyone daring to say that anti-Semitism does exist in Poland exposes himself to loss of his job and God knows what else. It is known for a fact that after meetings where Jews were asked if, in their opinion, anti-Semitism exists in Poland, those who had the courage to answer, "Yes!" paid dearly for it.

During the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, and later, Jews who had been driven from France, Germany, Austria, Moravia and Spain fled to various countries. Many of them came to Poland, which was then a tolerant country and which needed the Jewish immigrants. But the Poland of 1968 gives no such freedom of choice — Jews can leave Poland in one direction: to Israel.

There seems to be no logic here, and yet there is a logic in driving the Jews out exclusively to Israel. Expulsion has its own internal logic. Expulsion is always, in one way or another, connected with robbery. Do you wish to emigrate to Israel? Then you are a Zionist and you must forfeit your citizenship rights. The rest comes later.

And the forfeiture must be made "of one's own free will." When submitting the request forms for emigration to Israel, a

specially prepared sheet must be filled out, ostensibly addressed to the Government Council of the Polish People's Republic in which one "respectfully requests permission for change of citizenship." Naturally, no other citizenship is granted. The Polish Jew simply becomes a stateless person. Instead of a passport, he is given a travel permit which is valid for a ridiculously short period — at first only for a week — and he must leave the land of his birth at a moment's notice for an unspecified destination — a situation all too reminiscent of the recent dark past.

The bulk of Polish Jews are of an age at which they would become pensioners, a sizable percentage being well into their sixties. Forfeiture of citizenship automatically eliminates all pension rights and sick benefits — including disability pension. In order to insure the loss of these rights, the emigrant must yield all his pension documents, work passes, job awards — in short, any and every document that might bear witness to the fact that he worked and was creative in his native land for many years.

The above facts have been known for some time, and yet it is worth looking into them in greater detail, particularly in connection with the forced emigration exclusively to Israel. It is well known in Poland that the fleeing Jews also go to other countries — via Vienna, which has become a crossroads. For example, there are old or sick or lonely people who have a relative in some other country, or even a child, and who wish to end their years among their families. Here is an old couple, both of them over seventy, who have a daughter and grandchildren in France. They requested a normal passport to go directly to their children. It was denied, just as it is denied to all Jews. They had the courage to approach the appropriate authorities and to ask why they could not travel to their children in a normal manner. Why must they go via Israel? The answer was unambiguous: "Do as the others do. . ."

There is a logic to this madness. It would be too much of an eyesore to rob these people of their basic human rights. To deprive people of their citizenship rights — and, by the way, only a court of law can remove citizenship rights — solely on the ground of their ancestry, to rob them of their pensions, old-age

insurance, annuities, and the fruits of the work of a lifetime, is not only a flagrantly anti-humanitarian act but is also in contradiction to civilized international conventions. But to make all Jews out to be Zionists and to force them to use travel permits to Israel is a means to cover the illegality, the arbitrariness, to clothe it with a poorly-designed cloak of legality.

The bald facts are known. For the travel permit 5000 zlotys are needed; to return the cost of children's education — tens of thousands. Large sums are required for the so-called redecoration of the partment that is vacated, and for countless other fees to fulfill a myriad of formalities.

I recall a Jewish mother from Wroclaw with four underage children. In confusion and desperation, she figured: "Only for the travel permits — 30,000 zlotys!" Only . . . that was only the beginning.

I recall a family of four. The parents could hardly wait for their 24-year-old son to finish his studies. Now, this finishing had become a nightmare. In my presence, they calculated with a pencil: 5000 for the son's education (the amount depends on the subject majored in), 20,000 for travel permits, and then there were transportation and other fees. "Even if I sold everything saleable in the house, I wouldn't have enough money to leave," said my acquaintance. And she was not wrong. She had to ask for help to meet the education costs of her son. But she had made her calculations prematurely. She had not reckoned on 8000 zlotys for the rehabilitation of her home. And only a year-and-a-half ago, she had changed her apartment and invested a great deal of money in renovating it.

This is not an isolated case. The charge for "rehabilitating" the apartments that are vacated by those forced to leave their native land is one of the most perfidious devices for robbing them.

Information which has leaked out secretly indicates that in official administrative circles it has been stated that some 15,000 Jewish souls will have left Poland by the end of 1968 and that this pace was too slow — that it would take all of 1969 before Poland was "*Judenrein*." Even then, there would still remain some 2000 people in old-age homes, sick people, invalids and the like. At the same time, "General" Moczar reported that

there were not 25-30 thousand Jews in Poland, but 150,000. Since the early summer of 1968, the count of Jews has been steadily increasing. Who knows how many more Jews will be discovered?

But limiting ourselves only to the small number that is to be forced to leave by the end of 1968, it is worthwhile to explore, even superficially, the financial aspect of the exodus. An acquaintance of mine in Warsaw, a financial expert, sat down with a pencil before me and showed that, even considering the 50% discount that elderly pensioners receive in buying a travel permit, the government treasury would net a minimum of 90,000,000 zlotys in expelling 15,000 Jews. This figure includes only the receipts from sale of travel permits and from charging for rehabilitation of vacated apartments. It does not include reimbursements for children's education nor the many smaller charges incurred in completing the formalities.

While there are many Jews in Poland who can barely scrape together enough money to cover their emigration expenses, and must actually ask for help, there are also those who, during the course of a lifetime, have been able to save — some for a better apartment, others for additional comfort, and still others for misfortunes that might strike in their old age. The Polish government bank advertises ceaselessly for people to save and to entrust their money to it. Furthermore, it announces with pride statistics showing how the number of depositors increased. Among these depositors, of course, are Jews who have saved some money legally but for whom it is utterly impossible to withdraw it. Upon emigrating, the maximum allowable amount per person in the first summer months was five dollars per person, but, within a short time, even this negligible amount was no longer allowed.

As far as household goods are concerned, everything could be taken along in principle until recently [the end of 1968 - Ed.], but . . . and here we come to a very big "but." An official form is available which outlines what, and how much, may be taken along. As a result, members of Jewish families sit and rack their brains trying to figure out what they can take with them and what they had better forget about. The decision must be made

quickly, because everything to be taken along must be listed and described exactly, and the lists submitted several weeks before departure to the customs bureau. The filling out of the lists, which must be prepared in multiple copies, is veritable torment.

A special list must be prepared of objects which have any kind of artistic value — pictures, drawings, antiques and any objects which have an unusual appearance. These items must first be taken to the Curator to obtain permission for taking them along. The Curator runs a fair; people bring not only paintings and antiques but all kinds of old furniture, carved tables, chairs. The specialist must stamp each item in addition to issuing a written official permit. If the object is not stamped — whether it be an old flower plate, a bent brass candlestick, an old Chanuka lamp — it cannot be taken along even if it is described in the submitted list.

In the northern part of Warsaw, near the former Jewish section, behind the Danzig Railroad Station, there is an enclosed desolate area, flat and dreary, a silent witness of the recent past, with old neglected barracks. This is the headquarters of the customs bureau. Here must be brought the lists, with multiple copies, of the goods that one wants to take along. This is where are brought manuscripts, notes, various documents, photographs, photostats and similar “goods” — several weeks ahead of time so that the censors will have sufficient time to study them and decide what can be taken along and what cannot. The procedure goes by the outlandish name “Odprawa.”

It happens that the “Odprawa” can last for 8, 9, 10 and even 12 days, from 9 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon. Three to four days is the normal duration, but even after the shortest “Odprawa,” one emerges as from a steam bath. The packed cases are opened and the items are taken out one by one and completely unwrapped. The boxes are emptied to the very bottom and the wrapping material completely taken out so that, God forbid, nothing should remain concealed. Bedding, clothes, underwear, shoes are all opened and spread apart on a long table. Cups, plates, saucers, glasses, silverware and every other item of one’s property are stood up in rows, like soldiers, on the dirty floor. A bazaar.

Then the inspection starts, the investigation of anything and everything. Kitchen appliances are disassembled. An electric iron is plugged in — if there is anything concealed in it, the temperature will betray it. Among the stationery materials is a small bottle of glue — suspicious! The inspector mixes it thoroughly with a stick. The rear of a framed picture has a crack. In goes a wire and probes around. An old lady has a juice squeezer. It is so completely disassembled that she becomes uneasy about it ever being reassembled again. With tears in her eyes, she begs them not to take apart her sewing machine. It is taken apart. “Orders are orders,” she is told drily. What are they looking for? The fabled Jewish gold? Counter-revolutionary propoganda? It is best not to ask. The punishment for asking can be severe.

No matter how thoroughly one studies the regulations and how carefully one counts and weighs, the customs requirements are rarely met, especially since the lists must be prepared weeks in advance under severe physical and psychological stress. “I counted the child’s things four times,” said a nervous, exhausted woman to me after the “Odprawa”; she looked as though she had just been through a severe illness. But the customs officials are not exhausted, not nervous, not rushed. They count carefully — once, twice and a third time. The numbers must tally exactly. One official counts and another checks the list: 9 pairs of children’s underpants — but the list says only 8 — one pair is thrown aside; 3 jumpers — the list says 2 — one is thrown aside; 17 handkerchiefs — the list says 16 — one is thrown aside. Three worn out ironing sheets — the list says 2 — the owner had not noticed that two were stuck together, but the inspector did. The extra worn-out sheet would not be able to leave the Polish People’s Democracy with its owner.

These authentic facts which I either witnessed myself or which were told to me were valid as of three months ago [the fall of 1968 - Ed.]. Since then, the situation has changed substantially. Whether or not the 15,000 Jews who are to be expelled by the end of 1968 will actually manage to leave is doubtful, although it is known that some 17-18 thousand are registered at the Dutch consulate. But one thing is certain — the scope of the

robbery is being broadened, Wanton acts and chicanery are on the increase. Transportation fees to the border must be paid in advance and the value of goods that can be taken along is being restricted. Just a few weeks ago, the "Odprawa" required a family to bring measurements of their floors, certified by the housing administration, so that "Odprawa" could determine whether their only old rug was the one listed on their inventory or whether they had possibly bought a new one and made it specially dirty and old-looking.

Much space should be devoted to describing the wanton robbery of cultural possessions. I am not referring here to collective, social cultural treasures such as the robbery of the Jewish Institute, the contents of which were collected by Jewish efforts and supported by Jewish funds — from outside the country also. Nor am I referring to the closing down and liquidation of Jewish institutions. I refer here to personal, individual, cultural documents which they have worked on for years. It is doubtful whether anyone has risked declaring everything to the authorities, but even those items that appear to be entirely kosher are so thoroughly inspected that one inevitably is robbed of something of value. Particularly is this true of valuable books and books which were published before the war. Long before the inspection a list must be submitted to the National Library, which has been authorized to refuse permission to take out certain categories of books which are presumably needed by the Library. But when the National Library refuses permission to take along Graetz's *History of the Jews*, or a brochure about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising which was published in France after the war, this smacks of something quite different from the conservation of rare books.

Many cases are known in which permission was refused to take along notes for a book or a dissertation. The owners of the notes are referred to University authorities who have to agree

to allowing the individual to take along his own research material. There have been cases where photographs of Jewish antiquities were confiscated, and also collections of illustrations on which people worked for years.

Expulsion is always in one way or another bound up with robbery.

The Expulsion from Poland — 1968 is, externally, not similar to previous expulsions.

The means of robbing the expellees are also not similar to means used in the past.

But it is nevertheless robbery.

Why I Left My Homeland—Poland

by Michael Mirski

Friends in Poland were surprised that my wife and I, despite our age and declining health, undertook the perilous step of leaving Poland, the homeland where we enjoyed a secure material life. They consoled us with the assertion that the new political situation in the country would change, that it would pass. When I asked who would effect this change, they were silent. But I came to definite conclusions after careful consideration of all my activities down to the present and after thoughtful stock-taking.

It is these decisions, my friends, that I want to share with you.

The attitude of the Polish writers toward the banning of Mickiewicz's play *Dziady* and the action of the Polish student body in March 1968 — the latter carried out in a manner proper to youth — were socialist and patriotic manifestations.

The reply of the Stalinist elements now administering the political and economic life of the country to the action of the student youth was an attempt on the life of the Party and the civil rights of Polish society. All advances won after the change

MICHAEL MIRSKI, a writer and Marxist theoretician, was editor of various underground and semi-legal Communist publications in pre-war Poland. For his revolutionary activities he was incarcerated for a time in the notorious Kartuz-Bereza Prison by the pre-World War II government. During the war he served with the first Polish army organized by the Polish Patriots in the Soviet Union. He was the first editor of "Dos Neie Lebn," the first Yiddish newspaper in liberated Poland. Throughout the postwar years until his emigration from Poland in 1969 he was a Presidium member of the Cultural and Communal Council of the Jews of Poland. He is the author of numerous essays, a play on the Warsaw Ghetto and a book on the prison Kartuz-Bereza. He now makes his home in Copenhagen, Denmark.

of the Party line in 1956 were slowly retracted during the past ten years and were finally wiped out and liquidated. This was demonstrated most clearly by the intemperate, cynical, premeditated rioting of Moczar's followers at Party and other meetings. A reign of terror was established. We observed this frightening spectacle with pain and shame. We felt that something evil had taken place. At the same time I saw how people in my immediate circle were becoming submissive and frightened.

At a meeting of the party organization of the Society of Polish Writers, a notable writer for whom I had high regard, came out against a proposal to expel three writers — Yasiénica, Kisilewski and Gzhendzinski. Later, as the meeting drew to a close and after several of Moczar's followers had created an atmosphere of terror, this same writer submitted and voted for the proposal.

The Party organization in the periodicals *Nowe Drogi* (New Roads), *Zycie Partii* (Party Life), and *Zagadnienia i Materialy* (Problems and Materials) denounced and expelled one of its members because he had resigned his post as editor and left the Party as an expression of his protest against the anti-intellectual and anti-Jewish actions of the Party leadership. When I learned about this (I was not present at the meeting), I was outraged. I asked comrades how they could conduct themselves in this manner. Three of them whom I had highly regarded up to that time, confessed with shame that their behavior had been detestable.

The former editor-in-chief of *Nowe Drogi*, theoretical political organ of the Executive Committee of the Party, proposed that I be removed as editor of the publication on which I had served for 18 years, solely on the grounds that I had voted against the expulsion of three writers at the above-mentioned Party meeting of the Society of Polish Writers. The entire editorial personnel quietly and submissively accepted this proposal. Later comrades came to my editorial office and privately and tearfully begged my forgiveness for their human weakness.

When I took all of these developments into consideration, the attempt on the Party, the institution of terror, and the submissiveness of colleagues, I concluded that everything we had up to then called a Party had been totally destroyed. A reactionary change had occurred. The camouflaged political process

which had up to this time slowly and cynically reversed the Polish October of 1956, now emerged openly. These developments will bring misfortune to the country and to Socialism in Poland.

What had been begun in the Polish press, radio and especially in television, loosed an orgy of wild political trends. "*Moszek do Dayana*", ("Moshek go to Dayan"), "Out of Poland," "Down with the Fifth Column," "Moshek the Aggressor" — those were the "educational" slogans in large type on posters which the Moczar hooligans of the Warsaw Committee of the Party set out like a stage-set of a traveling circus. From one meeting to another they exhibited the presumed upsurge of "folk-anger." They threatened violent anti-Semitism which a distinguished political commentator had already justified on television unless foreign countries stopped their protests. It is necessary to affirm that, except for party hacks, even the social riff-raff who ordinarily respond to such appeals did not allow themselves to be drawn into such actions this time. They held firm even in the face of all sorts of modern techniques, dredged up from who knows where, to shock them with psychological tactics and libels on honest men, lies and slander.

We were glued to our television sets, shocked and ashamed that the so-called Party leadership had fallen so low as not to hesitate to wield the old weapon, which had always been used by the reactionary governments in Poland and elsewhere to solve social conflicts — the weapon of anti-Semitism.

What actually were the ruling circles in Poland aiming at?

Like gamblers venturing all on one card, their purpose was to prevent the workers from supporting the movement for socialist renewal represented by student youth and intellectuals. They determined to divert the workers at any price. Gomulka did not hesitate for a moment. From Moczar's ideological arsenal he borrowed a tactical weapon under the "communist" conviction that one may make a pact with the devil in order to rescue the supposedly endangered socialist order (identifying his Stalinist ruling system with socialism).

It is not important whether Gomulka really believed what

Moczar had whispered to him about a "Zionist Fifth Column" in Poland or whether, lost in his appraisal of the political situation, he had himself come to that view. The fact is, however, that, at the meeting of the Warsaw activists on March 19, he gave the green light to the beastly campaign in the ugliest political spectacle which Polish society had ever seen on television.

Thence a veritable witches' dance began, with insults and smears hurled at old fighters and workers for socialism in Poland, in the manner of the "cultural revolution." Naturally, as though by command, in pursuance of the political line of the Party leaders (so-called), loyal speakers, radio and television commentators and venal journalists were found to labor to present the action as a fight against the "Zionist-Mafia." But for old communist workers these events merely awakened memories of the so-called fight against the "Pilsudski-Mafia" during the thirties in the Soviet Union, when the leading actives of the Polish Communist Party were executed and all social, cultural and educational organizations of the Polish people were liquidated in the Soviet Ukraine and White Russia. History does not always repeat itself as farce but sometimes as near-tragedy as well. The prosecution, incidentally, had to relinquish the thesis of a "Zionist-Mafia" for lack of evidence. This main charge, hysterically propagandized, disappeared from the accusations in the judicial processes against the students in the latter half of 1969.

But at the above-mentioned meeting of the Warsaw Executive, Gomulka "presented" his own "contribution" to Marxism-Leninism. Indulging in a primitive discussion of Zionism and anti-Semitism, he did not hesitate to project a thesis (shameful for a communist) about "national affirmation" which revealed him as a disciple of the nationalistic tradition of Polish political writing. This "thesis," which asserts the necessity of applying the Arvan principle in choosing cadres, is totally unrelated to internationalism — not only of socialist, but even of revolutionary democrats and of liberal members of the bourgeoisie. If one were to accept this "creative deepening" of Marxism, one would have to agree that the October Revolution violated the will and

the rights of the *Russian* people, since the executive committee of twelve leaders consisted of one Pole, one Georgian, six cosmopolitans — “people without roots or tribal affiliation,” according to Stalinist terminology — and only four Russians. I recall Lenin’s rage when some Socialist-Revolutionary (S. R.) periodical alluded to Trotsky’s national origin. It is simply astonishing to see how narrow Gomulka’s political horizon has become. But Gomulka’s senseless views about “national affirmation” were slavishly seized upon and elaborated by the political mountebank Werblan (who knew where the wind was blowing) in the *Literary Monthly* of June, 1968, in an article marked by ignorance and open Judaeophobia. The same formulation was at once employed by Minister Yaruzelski as a theoretical basis for the “purges” carried out by the military. The administration of the Society of Labor Cooperatives in Warsaw, which presumably also held that the thesis of “national affirmation” also applied to them, refused to name two artisans as chairmen of the technical staff of the Jewish labor-cooperative “*Odrodzenie*” solely because of their Jewish origin. In Lodz there is a labor-cooperative which until 1968 bore the name of Dua-Bogen, well-known revolutionary activist and fighter in the Spanish Civil War, who returned to Poland from Cuba in 1947, and died in an automobile accident. The Party committee in Lodz ordered the name of Gershon Dua Bogen erased as a patron of the cooperative. Apparently anticipating Gomulka’s “thesis,” the party leaders of Walbrzych, in Lower Silesia, deemed it unfit that Naphtali Botwin, who sacrificed his life for Socialism in Poland, should be the spiritual patron of a cooperative and ordered his name stricken from the emblem of the cooperative. Perhaps they feared that Naphtali Botwin might be discovered after his death to have been a “Zionist.”

I could cite tens and hundreds of similar instances which stem from application of the “theory” of “national affirmation.”

At the same time as the governmental economic forces were getting rid of the so-called hostile elements under “ideological” sanction of the “theory” of national affirmation, a “holy war” was unleashed against the Jewish Social-Cultural Society in

Poland, which had to its credit the notable development of progressive Jewish culture whose influence radiated beyond the borders of Poland.

All Jewish youth clubs were dissolved. The monthly periodical *Yiddishe Shriftn* was banned. The publishing activities of *Yiddish Buch* were hampered in a manner that caused astonishment. Before a Yiddish book could be published, it was necessary to prepare a Polish translation of the manuscript for examination by the censor, a measure not known even in pre-war Poland or Czarist Russia. Letters sent to Zenon Kliszko, the “ideologist” of Socialist Culture, requesting that the humiliating decree be rescinded, remained unanswered.

The action to liquidate Jewish culture in Poland, similar to the steps taken in Soviet Russia in the thirties and again from 1948 to 1952, was accompanied by a clamor of nationalistic hatred in the press and on radio and television against the defenseless handful of Jews in Poland and against Jewish activists with 40-50 years of Party service.

When the so-called Party leadership officially described its crusade against Zionism as a campaign against a class enemy, accompanied by persecution of the citizens of Jewish nationality, against Jewish communists, this class war became nothing less than common anti-Semitic incitement.

Especially distinguished in this action was *Słowo Powszechne*, the newspaper of Boleslaw Piasecki, president of the organization “Pax.” This man was a pre-war fascist and leader of the so-called O En R A. What irony! He is the only political activist in Poland who has not changed his political credo for the past 35 years. Before the war he had fought communists and Jews; during the occupation he had collaborated with Hitlerites, fought communists and Jews, and now he is still fighting communists and Jews. It is reported that he was rewarded, thanks to Wladislaw Gomulka, with a high government award for his services on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of People’s Poland.

With shame and bitterness, I observed the quickly developing ideological and moral degeneration of the Party leadership. I protested, and waited for organized, official opposition by some

members of the Central Committee and even of the Politbureau who were shocked by this ideological and moral debasement. Some of them did give up their important government posts: Edward Ochab, Chairman of the State Council and President of the Republic; Adam Rapacki, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Jerzy Albrecht, Minister of Finance; Jerzy Sztachelski, Minister of Health; and Stefan Zolkiewski, member of the Presidium of the Polish Scientific Academy, notable literary scholar and philosopher. All were members of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers Party, and the first two were also members of the Politbureau.

Unfortunately, however, no confrontation of these forces occurred. True, the twelfth plenum of the Central Committee in the fall of 1968 did not proceed altogether peacefully. Several Central Committee members condemned the wild activities of the Moczarites. But Edward Ochab, often a bold and principled political man of action, a man who more than anyone was in the position to gather around him in the Central Committee a significant portion of its members to oppose the "ideology" of Moczar and who, by neutralizing Gomulka's group, could create a new group cohesion in the Central Committee and a new political situation in the country and, even if this had failed, at all events could have rescued the honor of the Party, chose to remain silent. He thus wasted an opportunity which was not to recur under those conditions though he undoubtedly still emerged as a decent human being, unstained by any vileness, something more might have been expected of him. Unfortunately he had not considered the weight his action would have had even on the fate of Czechoslovakia.

In those insane days of Moczar's activities, I proposed to an old Party worker the writing of a memorandum addressed to the Central Committee and the gathering of some tens of signatures or only of ten signatures of veterans of the communist movement. I received a rejection based, it seemed to me, on doubtful motives.

When I struck a balance of the political and moral situation which had arisen in the country, and my own place in it all,

three alternatives presented themselves to me: silence, resistance, flight.

I had never been able to enforce silence upon myself. I had never busied myself in the practice of that art. I do not know its virtue or its wisdom. Under the circumstances, silence would have meant submission to the reign of terror; automatic agreement with everything demanded of me would have been a violation of my conscience and convictions, becoming a servile weapon at the hands of the rulers for the realization of policies fatal to the country. I struggled against vegetating morally only because I had a secure material existence.

Resistance. I wanted to continue resisting with all the intensity of will and knowledge I had used in 1961 when the reversal by the so-called Party leadership of the political line of October 1956, took on a more rapid tempo. In my three-fold social activity (Society of Polish Writers, Warsaw Housing Cooperative, and the Social-Cultural Society of the Jews of Poland) I actively opposed relapse to the Stalinist methods engendered by Gomulka's "nationalist affirmation" theory. Among other things, I signed the writers' statement opposing expulsion of Prof. Leszek Kolakowski from the Party. On a day in December, 1965, I emerged from the Central Committee building at five A.M. from a meeting at which a commission of nine malicious members of the Central Committee under the direction of Zenon Kliszko had conducted a hearing for 12 hours of the individuals who had signed the memorandum.

At about the same time I sent an article to the weekly *Zycie Literackie* (Literary Life) in which I expressed my view of Wl. Machejek's Moczarite mode of dealing with Jewish problems in Poland. The article was not published, in keeping with Machejek's principle: "Jew, when I beat you over the head, shut up." I also publicly denounced the anti-Semitic article of Prof. F. Chalasinski.

All of this occurred, however, before the clash of arms in the Middle East when there still remained in Poland a measure of tolerance for those of different views. But after that event, and particularly after the events of March, 1968, even restricted

possibilities were no longer feasible. The country entered a period of open cynicism in which the so-called Party leadership ceased to take into account even common decency. What this meant for the leadership was an unceremonious, facile adoption of the Stalinist concept of the Party, when *every expression of critical thought* by a citizen, and especially of a communist and Party member, in relation to the Party line of the so-called Party leadership, even with respect to tactical methods, was treated as a manifestation of class hostility to the socialist order, as a sign of relations with bourgeois governments, or as proof of basic deviation. The so-called leadership overstepped the bounds of shamelessness and impudence. The result for any one with a critical attitude was to be cast into prison or an insane asylum.

Having thus discarded the alternative of silence, and having begun resistance, I considered my next steps. If I had been ten years younger I would have continued resistance by the path of student youth at the cost of a few years in prison. My advanced age, however, would not permit this, especially because of the chain reaction of unrest from below and conspiracy from above which accompanies the system of Stalinist control (not to be confused with socialist order) as at first happened in the Soviet Union, and later in the so-called People's Democracies. Such eventualities occasioned a good deal of thought on my part. I could express these thoughts only beyond the borders of this land. If even in some small way I could succeed in helping to dispel the darkness of the anti-Leninist system into which the Stalinist faction has brought the Communist movement, and reveal the causes of the disturbances from below and the conspiracy from above which are an expression of elemental efforts to escape from the dilemma, I should be doing something.

Hence, only the third alternative remained: to leave the country. I accepted the stigma attached to me as an alleged Zionist who had allegedly determined "to cut himself off from the Polish people" and to follow "the call of the blood" in the vivid language of Zenon Kliszko of which Goebbels himself would not have been ashamed. I left Poland.

Polish society is not allowing itself to be misled. It takes an altogether different view of everything that has happened, and ridicules the perfervid gibberish of the Stalinist backsliders. Incidentally, the so-called Party leadership knows that 80 percent of those who leave Poland enter a no-man's land. Some first go to Vienna; the majority go to Rome; from these places they choose a country to which they wish to go. For the tragic political emigrants from Poland, some of whom have escaped the hell of Hitlerism, the *decisive* factor in their decision is not the country to which they are going, but only the *circumstance* under which *they are leaving Poland*. They can no longer stomach personal, national, and Party insults. The present exodus from Poland is something special. Human beings are leaving Poland who never imagined that they would ever leave the country. However, I am writing about myself. I address myself to my friends inside and outside of Poland.

I declare that, notwithstanding my so-called voluntary relinquishing of Polish citizenship, I still consider myself a Polish citizen. *Poland has been and will remain my homeland* regardless of where I may be and whatever country may give me hospitality and the right to live there. I am a *political emigrant* and shall await the time when I shall be able to return to my country, to my Warsaw, to my friends and neighbors, in and out of the Party.

I might have chosen as my temporary settlement Israel, which does everything possible to make the refugees from Poland feel at home. However, I cannot enjoy Israel's hospitality because I do not wish to take up my compulsory homelessness as a political emigrant in a manner that would permit a Stalinist demagogue to capitalize on it. Why should I make it easier for him to play this disgusting, Jesuitical game? It is true that I cannot easily create the conditions in which I will be able to live and work and embark on my writing activity.

Perhaps I shall live to see the day when the Stalinists, who discredit the very nature of Socialism and usurp dictatorial power uncontrolled by the masses in Poland and other socialist lands, will be ousted from the political arena by the pressure

of the growing new productive forces in these lands, forces which will then break up old politico-social relationships, those deformed in the early, non-revolutionary, reactionary stage of Socialism and check the development of science and technology and stifle every socialist initiative of the younger generation. Perhaps I shall live to see the day when Stalinist dogmas will crumble under the pressure of Leninist thought which, regardless of its falsification by the Stalinist faction for decades, yet makes headway. Leninist thought, not yet fully realized in its fullest form and now represented by the emerging progressive socialist forces in the labor movement, will deepen and carry forward in theory and practice the work begun by Lenin. This is *inevitable*.

Personal reflections are not the place for broader considerations. I shall take another time and a more suitable form for those considerations. I should like to conclude with greetings to the student youth, Kuron, Modzelewski, and the others imprisoned solely because they dared to reveal their quest for *socialist alternatives* to the Stalinist ruling system.

It is hard to agree with all the proposals presented by them, whether in the negative or positive aspects of their program. But it is necessary to learn the tolerance with which Lenin, during the First World War, criticised the left socialist youth for its mistakes in a good cause. Too great a burden was thrust upon our young intellectuals to whom history has assigned the task of reconstructing the backward ideology of the older generation.

I send greetings to the members of the Society of Polish Writers.

Till we meet again.

Aragon, Sartre, Kastler, Madaule, and Others Protest Anti-Jewish Events in Poland

Louis Aragon, Jean Paul Sartre, Prof. Alfred Kastler, Jacques Madaule, Elsa Triolet, Simone De Beauvoir, Michel Gordey, and Maurice De Gandillac have issued the following statement on the anti-Jewish events in Poland:

For the past few months anti-Semitism has been promoted in Poland under the pretext of anti-Zionism, by one section, at least, of the leadership. Though it is true that anti-Semitism is officially censured and official acts do not reveal it, one is reminded of various sad precedents in the atmosphere one breathes.

Before the war Poland had a population of three and a half million Jews. Some thirty thousand of them were left in Poland. Now more than two-thirds of these have been driven from the country. Soon hardly any Jews will remain, since they are "encouraged" to leave the country and even that on condition that they emigrate to Israel. Their Zionism is thereby "confirmed."

As friends of Poland for many years, we are grieved at this situation, particularly since it runs counter to the principles acknowledged by the Polish government.

We demand that the Polish authorities immediately halt the campaign of systematic humiliation and suspicion which victimizes the citizens of Jewish origin, and that they rescind the unjustified sanctions from which too many have suffered by being forced to deny their past life.

Former Polish Communists in Israel Issue Appeal on Situation in Poland

Editors' Note: The following Appeal was issued by an organization of former members of the pre-war Communist Party of Poland and its successor organizations who are now living in Israel. This Appeal was adopted in Tel Aviv at a celebration which marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Poland. The Appeal was reprinted in the Frei Yisroel, the Tel Aviv Yiddish Communist weekly newspaper of January 30, 1969, and the slightly abridged version follows:

The Association of Veteran Activists of the Revolutionary Workers Movement in Israel, which consists of former members of the Communist Party of Poland, the International Red Aid (MOPR), Pioneers, the Polish Workers Party, and the Polish United Workers Party, has assembled at this solemn session to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party of Poland.

We proudly declare that the Communist Party of Poland has educated us in the spirit of our common ideals of Socialism and proletarian internationalism. We fought through our entire lives to fulfill these ideals and they glow before us still with undimmed brilliance and splendor.

Unfortunately, we are now compelled to state with bitterness that we have suffered a harsh defeat in our struggle.

In Poland, where the leadership is the Party which bases itself, and not always unrightfully, on Socialism and Marxism-Leninism, such a chauvinist atmosphere has developed, that the citizen of Jewish origin, whether a Communist and Party member or not, suddenly finds himself menaced and forced to

decide to leave his native land, for whose freedom he fought many times with arms in hand.

Invalids, those wounded in struggle and on the barricades, those who are ailing and are no longer young after having spent years in jail, veterans of the labor movement, Communists with records going back many years and fighters in Spain, all are emigrating without means of livelihood and without any hope of finding a new home for themselves.

This seems simply beyond belief. Yet, it is the horrible reality. If this were not the reality, there would also not be this letter in which we appeal to you.

We speak of this matter with profound distress after having concluded that, in view of the situation which has developed in Poland, silence would be most harmful. Many of us practiced the tactic of silence for long years, when anti-Semitic attitudes and manifestations in the Polish United Worker's Party appeared to be of a sporadic and individual character. Such manifestations appeared to us to be the remains of the period when Poland was ruled by reaction.

At one time we were convinced that the Party would defeat such manifestations of anti-Semitism along with the bearers of political backwardness. What occurred was the opposite. The epidemic of anti-Semitism in the Party, and especially in the leading bodies, has assumed such proportions that we have no alternative but to sound the alarm.

The activity, particularly of a number of individuals in the leadership of the Party and of the government, not only profanes the great revolutionary traditions of the Polish working class and its struggles against various forms of nationalism, chauvinism and anti-Semitism, but also compromises the entire world Communist movement.

We deem it absolutely necessary to state that it is not true that the political campaign which was initiated by the leadership of the Polish United Worker's Party after the Six Day War in the Middle East in June, 1967, had the sole aim of struggle against Zionism.

Former members of the Communist Party of Poland, present members of the Polish United Worker's Party of Jewish origin

who never had any ties with Zionism have suddenly become Zionists in the view of the present leaders of this Party. It is not true that Communists of the Jewish nationality have succumbed or are succumbing to the influence of Zionist ideology.

What is true is that the campaign initiated by the leadership of the Polish United Worker's Party has been conducted against Polish citizens of the Jewish nationality and is exclusively directed against them. This campaign does not have the character of a political action, but is a drive with a marked anti-Semitic bias.

The signal for the start of this campaign was, regrettably, the address by the Party's general-secretary Gomulka, who leveled an ugly charge at the Jewish community in Poland, designating it a "fifth column." Since that address the entire Polish press, radio and television has been preoccupied with the problem of Zionism and Jews.

The dismissal of Jews from their jobs, thus depriving them of their means of livelihood, has become a daily occurrence. On Polish television one can hear such descriptions as "dirty and mangy Jews." It is impossible to enumerate the many statements of responsible leaders at the various levels of the Party hierarchy which betray a clear and unequivocal anti-Jewish character.

We call attention to the fact that Poland is the only Socialist nation in which such an anti-Semitic campaign has found a place since the Middle East war, though all the Socialist nations have denounced the so-called Israeli aggression.

In the course of this supposed anti-Zionist campaign, Andrzej Werblan, head of the Division for Culture and Science of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party, published an essay in which he placed the accent on the letter "J". He wrote that what was involved was the removal of Jews from leading positions in the Party apparatus, in the security organs, in foreign commerce, diplomacy and the press. He had the temerity to write that there were too many Jews in the pre-war, underground Polish Communist Party. He cynically repeated the old anti-Semitic slogan that a "national minority" cannot be allowed to dominate Poland, though for the past

quarter century governing power in Poland has been in the hands of the working masses at whose head stands the Party of the working class and not any "national minority."

Werblan did not even mention Zionism. He spoke directly of Jews. He merely revealed what has long been an axiom: They say "Zionism," but mean "Jew."

Werblan's essay was no accident or error. At the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party in November, 1968, Werblan was reelected to the Central Committee and again conducts the Division for Culture and Science of the Central Committee.

Things have gone so far that the premier, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, who was himself an inmate in the Auschwitz concentration camp, in an official address in which he listed all the nationalities who suffered from the Hitlerite extermination policy, did not mention the Jews, who comprised a very large percentage of the victims of nazism.

The situation produced by this anti-Semitic campaign has led to the liquidation of almost all the Jewish cultural institutions in People's Poland which were built with great effort by the small remnant of Jews who were saved from the crematoriums. There no longer exists the monthly magazine, *Yiddishe Shriften* (Jewish Writings), Jewish schools and clubs, etc.

Provocations against Jewish Communists and non-party people have become a daily phenomenon. The vulgar anti-Semitism of the present leaders of People's Poland reached its climax when Jewish parents were called to account for the alleged "sins" of their children.

As a result of the anti-Semitism propagated under the cover of the struggle against Zionism, hundreds and thousands of Jews are now leaving Poland, Jews whose objective in life was the struggle for Socialist construction in Poland together with the Polish people.

The sole remaining survivor of the accused and convicted defendants in the famous anti-Communist trial of 1922, Shmuel Reiter, was forced to leave Poland. Twenty veterans of the war in Spain, members of the International Brigades, have been forced to leave Poland. The former prisoner of the reactionary

Sanacja regime, Stanislaw Wygodzki, the poet, Arnold Slucki, veterans of the revolutionary worker's movement such as Winlawski, Marimont, Bank, Meiteles and many, many others have been forced to leave Poland.

Departing from Poland are scholars, professors, and academicians who placed their knowledge at the service of Polish science.

Dear comrades, we request that the Communist Parties all over the world do everything possible so that future generations of Communists may not blush with shame at the unbelievable trampling upon the most elementary principles of Marxism and Leninism by the present leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party.

Amical-Zbowid

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

(*Naie Presse*, March 8, 9, 1969)

The Amical (Association) of the Former Jewish Anti-Nazi Resisters, an affiliated body of the Federation of the Resistance and Partisan Organizations in France, has sent us documentation of the exchange of letters between this association of Jewish Resisters and the ZBOWID, the Polish Organization of Resistance Fighters, dealing with the situation of the Jews in Poland.

We present below important excerpts from these letters.

On October 15, 1968 the Amical sent a letter signed by its General-Secretary, Raf Feigelson, to the ZBOWID in Poland. This letter began by stressing the "anti-fascist brotherhood of arms" against Hitlerism which links the Jewish and Polish resistance fighters. The letter further explains that Amical has the obligation to convey "frankly the feelings of disquiet and disapproval of the comrades of the resistance in France in regard to the campaign and the measures which strike at the Polish Jews."

Amical's letter recounts a number of the discriminatory measures which Polish Jews have endured for some months. "Our anxiety," this letter states, "is intensified by the fact that certain of the Polish Jews who are suffering from this discrimination are known to us personally through their participation in the French resistance in World War II."

The Amical requested an early response to its letter. However, when no reply was forthcoming, the Amical asked the French Federation of Resistance and Partisan Organizations to intercede in its behalf. The general-secretary of the Federation, Fournier-Bouquet, asked ZBOWID for an early and clear answer both to Amical's letter and to still another appeal of Resistance veterans in France at a session of the International Resistance Federation (FIR) in Vienna, and later in a letter of December 26, 1968. This latter appeal to ZBOWID was signed by Nelly Velvey.

After these intercessions Amical received a lengthy answer from the ZBOWID on January 11, 1969 which was signed by its general-secretary, Rusinek, and its vice-president, Lechowicz. After apologizing for the delay, the signers of ZBOWID's letter state:

1) Since the events of June, 1967 "Poland has become the object of calumnies and shameless slander" in the capitalist press and "through other means" whose object "is to besmirch our country, its history, and the record of the Polish people during the Hitlerite occupation."

The signers of ZBOWID's letter suggest that the source of these "lying attacks" is to be found "in Zionist circles" and "partly also in the circles of West German propaganda."

2) After pointing out that Jews are treated equally with all other citizens and that "Zionism is no more tolerated than any other form of chauvinism," the authors of the letter explain the dismissal of certain Jews from their positions as a "normal phenomenon of replacing personnel" which also affects non-Jews. Those dismissed receive pensions.

3) In connection with the conflict in the Middle East, "certain Polish citizens of Jewish origin, succumbing to the propaganda and financial assistance of Zionist organizations, found it neces-

sary to leave Poland for Israel and they encountered no obstacles in leaving." However, "these Jews, while stopping over in Western countries or upon their arrival in Israel, put on a false face for both the reasons for their departure, and the general situation of the Jews in Poland."

4) In the struggle against Hitlerite fascism, which intended to destroy both the Polish and Jewish peoples, a struggle in which millions of Polish citizens perished, many Poles helped their Jewish fellow-citizens despite the penalty of death which those rendering such aid would receive if discovered.

In conclusion, there is the reminder that one must not forget the resurgence of neo-nazism in West Germany.

The Amical despatched its reply to ZBOWID's letter at the end of February, 1969. Its letter stated in part:

1) "You pretend that since June, 1967, since the events in the Middle East, Poland has become the target of a campaign of lying and slander, and that the source of this campaign of the press in the capitalist countries originates in Zionist circles and in West Germany. This would imply that we, too, are under these influences.

"We cannot understand how you could make such an accusation against us. It appears that you forgot you are discussing this matter with authentic resistance veterans who, in the common struggle, fought the same foe as you.

"Our disquiet, which compels us to draw your attention to certain occurrences in your country, is not caused by anything in the press of the capitalist countries, as you claim, but unfortunately, by the Polish press."

The bureau of the Amical then cites a number of statements which appeared in Polish newspapers. One such statement reads:

"The Hershkowitzes, Summerfelds, Skotchglas and Mordkoviches prey upon the naive Polish athletes who participate in the sporting events in the Western countries, particularly at Grenoble, in order to rob them of everything they won."

This statement had appeared in the Warsaw newspaper, *Przegląd Sportowy*. The Amical letter asks:

"Don't you think this statement reminds one of the ignominious and vulgar coloration of anti-Semitism? What is even more

distressing is the fact that this article was published on April 18, 1968, on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto."

Another statement is cited which appeared in the *Walka Młodych*, the official Polish youth paper. This newspaper wrote: "It is no accident" if, at the head of these student demonstrations in Poland of March, 1968, one find "the Blumenfelds, the Daitchgewands, Grosses, Grudzinskas, etc. They are all linked by the same origin and the same blood."

The Amical letter asks:

"The same blood! Does this mean that the blood of the students of Jewish origin is different from the blood of their Polish comrades?"

"Do you not suppose this assertion has a certain similarity to the ideas which were expressed in the (nazi) racist ideas at Nuremberg?"

The letter then cites two caricatures which appeared in the magazine *Karuzela* of Lodz on May 19, 1968, and January 15, 1969. The Amical letter states:

"No comment is needed on these. No high nazi leader, whether Streicher or Himmler, would turn them down. On the contrary, the artist would have received a significant award.

"You must appreciate that these documents and facts completely justify our uneasiness. Permit us to ask a precise question.

"Are the authors of these articles and caricatures called to account, and what measures have been taken against them? We ask you to give us a clear answer."

2) In the latter part of its letter Amical notes that ZBOWID is incorrect in claiming the same measures as are applied to Jews are also applied to other Polish citizens.

"A non-Jewish Polish citizen may travel to any country he wishes to see his family, children, etc., whereas Polish citizens of Jewish origin can travel in only one direction — to Israel. At the same time they must agree to being deprived of their Polish citizenship. It appears this is done so as to prove that these Jews are 'Zionists.'"

After listing other related facts, Amical's letter concludes:

"We request an answer to the facts we cited above and whether they do not constitute discriminatory treatment capable of encouraging anti-Semitism in your country?"

"As sincere friends of the Polish People's Democracy we believe the small Jewish minority which still lives in Poland will be jeopardized if the former resistance veterans of your country do not react sharply against this situation. We are therefore justified in being uneasy as to the fate of this minority and we maintain that these discriminatory actions distort the humanitarian aspect of Socialism.

"These actions (in Poland) create obstacles in establishing in our country a broad united front of all resistance veterans, of all anti-nazis and victims of Hitlerism to combat neo-nazism and to oppose the despicable plan of the West German government to vote this year on making the Statute of Limitations inapplicable any longer to war criminals."

Amical's letter ends with the "expectation of a reply."

An Open Letter to the Government of the Peoples Republic of Poland

We, the undersigned writers, critics and scholars, have long applauded the deep concern of the government of the People's Republic of Poland for both the physical welfare and the cultural development of the remnant of Polish Jewry that survived the Nazi holocaust. We are, therefore, shocked and dismayed by the recent revival of anti-Semitism in Poland, inspired and abetted by some leaders of the same government that in the past has combatted it with the utmost vigor.

With consternation we witness the disappearance of cultural institutions and the suspension of publications which the government had so generously supported over the years. The literary monthly, *Yiddische Shriften*, published since 1946, was suspended. State schools for Jewish children are no longer operative. The same is true of the summer camps for Jewish children. The existence of cultural institutions that are still functioning is seriously undermined by the loss of leadership and the reduction in personnel. The Yiddish newspaper, *Die Folksstimme*, is reduced to a weekly, its editor and most of the staff dismissed from their jobs.

What began as, under the circumstances, a questionable anti-Zionist campaign quickly turned into an unmistakable anti-Semitic campaign, as even some members of the government recognized. Polish Jews who chose to participate in the reconstruction of their homeland after its destruction by the Nazi invaders are now charged with disloyalty, dismissed from their jobs and exposed to an atmosphere of anti-Semitism so intolerable as to make it impossible for them to remain in the country.

Thousands have already left Poland and, of the tiny remnant of 25,000 Jews there, it is estimated that 15,000 have already applied for exit visas.

Whatever the desired destination of the departing Jews, their exit visas are valid for only one country — Israel. Upon receiving their exit permits they must relinquish their Polish passports and are automatically deprived of their Polish citizenship. From that moment on they become stateless people. These are some of the hardships and humiliations attending their departure from their homeland.

The erstwhile pogromist, Boleslaw Piasecki, a leader of the fascist *Falanga* of prewar Poland, is today a respectable spokesman in the People's Republic of Poland, whereas Jewish cultural leaders and workers, many of whom had spent years in the prisons of Pilsudski Poland for revolutionary activity, and who in World War II were members of undergrounds in ghettos and

concentration camps, are now once again ostracized victims of anti-Semitism.

We dare not, through silence, make ourselves accomplices in this heartbreaking, this incredible catastrophe. We must urge with the utmost solemnity that the Polish government stop this self-destructive course while a remnant of Polish Jewry and of the government's socialist honor yet remain to be saved.

This *Open Letter* was sent out to leading newspapers around the world, as well as to various organizations and institutions, over the following signatures:

James Aronson
Dr. Francis H. Bartlett
B. A. Botkin
Millen Brand
Prof. Dorothy Brewster
Olga Cabral
Ossie Davis
Prof. Frederic Ewen
Dr. Michael Folsom
Maxwell Geismar
Barbara Giles

Joanna Grant
Y. P. Harburg
Dr. Louis Harap
Mary Jane Keeney
Aaron Kramer
Harry Magdoff
A. B. Magil
Albert Maltz
Carl Marzani
Tom McGrath
Rev. Wm. H. Melish

Robert Nemiroff
Rev. Dryden L. Phelps
Charlotte Pomerantz
Dr. A. T. Rubinstein
Prof. Norman Rudich
Morris U. Schappes
Dr. Howard Selsam
Prof. Herbert Shapiro
Yuri Suhl
Paul M. Sweezy
William Wolf

Statement on the Jews of Poland

Adopted at a Meeting of Leaders of Progressive Jewish Organizations - November 16, 1968, McAlpin Hotel - N. Y., N. Y.

In May of this year we, the undersigned representatives of progressive Jewish organizations in the United States, published a statement on the developments in Poland in connection with the March events and the so-called *anti-Zionist* campaign that was in full swing there at that time. We then warned that this campaign bears anti-Jewish connotations and represents a grave danger to the Jewish community of Poland and to People's Poland itself. With deep regret and sorrow we are compelled to state that the situation has since then taken a turn for the worse. The developments are such that what we feared most became reality.

In July, 1968, it was openly admitted at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers' Party that the anti-Zionist campaign had assumed an anti-Jewish character. The prominent party leader Zenon Kliszko, member of the Politburo, said: "In some party organizations and especially among functionaries, the atmosphere of struggle against Zionism is artificially sustained. . . . A Jew is identified with a Zionist. . . . Too harsh a stand is taken with regard to small offenses by people of Jewish extraction — offenses of a kind that is often overlooked in others." The Central Committee member Jerzy Albrecht, one of the founders of the Polish Workers Party during the Nazi occupation, criticized "throwing together into one Zionist pile all Jews and among them not infrequently good Communists who proved their devotion to socialism and People's Poland with their lives." The Central Committee member Bole-

slaw Ruminski declared that "in the struggle against revisionism and Zionism there recently appeared patent expressions of nationalism and even anti-Semitism." And Wladyslaw Gomulka himself, summarizing the discussion in the C. C., stated that the campaign against Zionism "generates among the Polish people a certain inimical attitude towards Jews in general."

These, as the situation later showed, were very restrained evaluations of an acute anti-Jewish situation, which has already had very sad consequences. Life-long Jewish Communists, many of whom had spent years in prisons and in the concentration camp Kartuz-Bereza — in the Poland of the National Democratic Party, of Pilsudski and the *Sanacja*, have been ousted from the Party and deprived of jobs. Some of them, whom we know personally, had distinguished themselves as partisans in the struggles against the Nazis, had participated in the anti-fascist war in Spain, had been inmates of Auschwitz and other death camps. Among them are many who had returned to People's Poland after World War II to take part in building socialism. Many of them bitterly opposed the postwar slogan of *Exodus from Poland*. The fact that such oldtime Communist activists also were targets of anti-Jewish persecution speaks volumes on the repression against Jews generally and on the anti-Jewish atmosphere that was created. These repressions and the prevailing atmosphere have resulted in the forced emigration of Jews from Poland in what amounted to expulsion. According to reports from Vienna, where the emigrants first go, several thousand Jews have already left Poland and between 12 to 15 thousand are registered to depart. Those who have left and those who are planning to leave represent the majority of the small Jewish community of 25-30 thousand who resided in Poland until about a half a year ago.

It should be noted that exit permits are granted to Jews only with Israel listed as destination, apparently so that the record will show that the emigrants wish to go only to that land even though many desire to emigrate to countries other than Israel. Many of the travelers succeed in Vienna in changing their destination to France, U.S.A., Canada or other lands.

Among those who could no longer remain in Poland — due to the anti-Jewish climate and discrimination—was the internationally famous Jewish-Polish actress, Ida Kaminska, the founder of the Jewish State Theater in Poland, and its director for more than 20 years. Born in Poland, of generations-old Jewish-Polish ancestry, this great theater personality, only a year ago when she performed with the Jewish State Theater in New York, generated much good will and honor for People's Poland. However, though beloved and esteemed in the theatrical world of Poland, she felt constrained to emigrate and to abandon the theater bearing the name of her mother, the world-renowned Polish-Jewish actress, Esther Rachel Kaminska. Then the Yiddish newspaper *Di Folksshtime* was reduced to a weekly, without most of the names of its former contributors appearing in its pages. Next the literary monthly, *Yiddishe Shriften*, published since 1946, almost since the liberation of Poland, was suspended. And neither at the beginning of the school year nor at any time thereafter has anything been heard about reopening the Jewish Children's State Schools which existed since the inception of People's Poland. The Jewish children's camp did not operate this past summer. And there are indications that the existence of the Jewish Historical Institute is also threatened.

These are the facts that are known to us. There are many more that are the consequence of an over-all anti-Jewish repression — repression against Jewish professors in universities, scientists, writers, theater people, film workers, journalists — many of them ousted from their jobs. The same holds true for Jews in government and party positions and many ordinary workers.

We are citing this brief summary of facts with pain in our hearts. Our record as friends of People's Poland is well-known. Ever since the formation of the People's Government in Lublin in 1944 we conducted a consistent struggle against elements in our country that maligned and slandered People's Poland. At the Ghetto memorial meetings, which we have been arranging every April since 1944, we received the official representatives of the Polish People's Republic, usually headed by the Polish

Ambassador, with enthusiasm and acclaim. And the thousands who participated at these meetings listened with great joy and approbation to the words of the representatives, who related the aid and support extended by the Polish People's government to the tiny Jewish community in its efforts to build a rich communal and cultural life. With joy and pride we invariably stressed this enlightening attitude of People's Poland and held it up as a model for solving the problems of minorities generally and of the Jewish question in particular — as a model for fostering Jewish progressive culture under socialism.

Then, however, Jewish culture, cultural institutions and the entire Jewish community of Poland met with a catastrophe that shocked us. We shudder at the sight of a revived anti-Semitic atmosphere which is remindful of the anti-Semitism in Poland between the two World Wars. We are appalled by a situation in which an individual like Boleslaw Piasecki, former leader of the pogromist and fascist *Falanga* of prewar Poland, has become a spokesman of present-day Poland, with newspapers and various institutions at his disposal. Piasecki, like the former N.D. leader Klaudiusz Hrabyk, who in 1934 advocated that Poland become *Judenrein*, like many followers of the Polish government-in-exile in London, began to influence public life in Poland and contributed to the anti-Jewish atmosphere that helped realize their old dream of a Poland cleansed of Jews. We are shocked at this development and we express our condemnation and protest against it as anti-fascists, as friends of socialism and as Jews who are concerned with the security and fate of our people in every country.

We regard this development as a bitter tragedy for the Jewish people generally and for Jewish progressives particularly; and it is a tragedy for People's Poland itself. This development is in flagrant contradiction to the principles of socialism, of internationally recognized human rights and of the humanism of many great figures in Polish history such as Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Adam Mickiewicz and others; of leaders in the historic struggles for the national liberation of Poland, participated in by Polish Jews as loyal patriots of their country. The current development

is a desecration of the humanism of the founders of socialist People's Poland, Boleslaw Bierut and others who helped build the Jewish community and Jewish national culture. The anti-Jewish chauvinism that has affected organs of the Polish press and government institutions is a betrayal of everything the aforementioned and other great figures in Polish history cherished, a betrayal of the anti-fascist fighters of the *Gwardia Ludowa* and other progressive Polish elements who, together with the Ghetto heroes of Warsaw, held aloft the slogan — *For Our Freedom and Yours*.

Through the years we have heralded the fact that even in the terrible days of the Nazi occupation there were many Poles who helped save Jews at the risk of their lives, fighting both against the Nazis and the Nazi henchmen of the Piasecki type. We know that currently many sections of the Polish people, of the Polish intelligentsia, of the writers and academic youth are opposed to the official anti-Jewish practice. True to the slogan *For Our Freedom and Yours* we appeal to the leaders of the party and government of Poland: *Put a Halt to this Policy!* This is a policy that must disturb all who treasure the principles of human rights and friendship among peoples, who hold dear the principles of socialism.

It would be criminal on our part to create illusions and refuse to see the stark reality: the Jewish community of Poland is being driven to destruction! To our deep sorrow, we must acknowledge it — out of responsibility to the history of our people and the history of Poland. A thousand years ago Poland extended hospitality to the persecuted Jews of Germany and other countries in Central and Western Europe. Now leaders of Poland, some because of the struggle for power, some because of weakness and fear, some carried away by hysteria, some with deliberate malice, have seen to it that a thousand years of Jewish life in Poland should be approaching an end. If this policy is not changed at once, clearly, decisively and openly, those guilty of this development will stand accused before the

history of the Jewish people, before the history of Poland itself, before the history of mankind.

Simon Federman, *President*
American Federation of Polish Jews

Kalman Friedman, *Secretary*
Council of Warsaw Jews

Leah Nelson, *National President*
Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs

Itche Goldberg, *National Director*
Friends of Secular Jewish Education

Sonia Susman, *President*
Jewish Cultural Clubs and Societies

Abraham Lechowitzky, *National Secretary*
Jewish Music Alliance

Abraham Jenofsky, *National Secretary*
Yiddisher Kultur Farband (YKUF)

Paul Novick, *Editor*
Morning Freiheit

Morris U. Schappes, *Editor*
Jewish Currents

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

JERZY ALBRECHT, former member of the Central Committee of PZPR (United Polish Workers Party), former Minister of Finance in the Polish People's Republic, one of the leaders of the PPR (Polish Workers Party) during the Hitler occupation. Removed by Gomulka from leadership for condemning Werblan's "theory" at the 1968 plenum of the Central Committee.

MORDECAI ANIELEWICZ, member of "Hashomer Hatzair," fought in a united front with Communists in fascist Poland against the anti-Semitic Piasecki gang. The leader of the Ghetto uprising in Warsaw in 1943. Died in the fighting.

BOLESŁAW BIERUT, prominent pre-war Communist leader. Spent many years in prison during Pilsudski regime. One of the leaders of the PPR during the Nazi occupation. President of Poland and First Secretary of PZPR. Forced by Stalin to imprison Gomulka in 1951, together with Berman and Zambrowski. Saved his life by successfully resisting efforts to stage a Polish Slansky trial. Died suddenly in Moscow while attending the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

NAFTOLI BOTWIN, heroic Jewish young Communist, executed in 1925 in Lwow for killing a known agent provocateur, Cechnowski.

JOZEF CHALASINSKI, University Professor, known sociologist, author of many books. The prominent Polish Marxist of Jewish descent, *Adam Schaff*, in 1965, published a book, "Marxism and the Individual" in which he pointed out that anti-Semitism still remains a problem under socialism. Werblan and Kliszko severely criticized him for that. Prof. Chalasinski joined the discussion by publishing an anti-Semitic article.

JOZEF CYRANKIEWICZ, an unprincipled careerist, a Polish Talleyrand. Former PPS leader, long time member of the Political Bureau of PZPR, for 21 years Prime Minister of the government. In December, 1970, when the workers took to the streets to protest against the Gomulka policies, he gave an order to shoot to kill. A few days later he was shifted to the presidency of Poland. Hypocritically proclaiming himself a friend of Jews, he took a leading role in the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign.

DR. SZYMEN DATNER, noted Jewish historian. Until the summer of 1970 he headed the Jewish Historical Institute. Resigned in protest against Moczar's anti-Semitic policies.

GERSHON-DUA-BOGEN, prominent pre-war Jewish Communist. Fought in Spain. Died in Poland in the early fifties in a car accident.

W. GOMULKA (Wieslaw). Pre-war trade union and Communist Party activist. Under the Hitler occupation, after Pawel Finder, the General-Secretary of the PPR was arrested by the Gestapo under suspicious circumstances, Gomulka succeeded him. Removed in 1948, came back to power in 1956, forced to resign in Dec. 1970. (Pawel Finder was Jewish.)

KLAUDJUSZ HRABYK, prominent pre-war fascist. In 1934, in a pamphlet, "The Jewish Question in Poland," he predicted that even a socialist government in Poland will be anti-Semitic. In 1945, he escaped to Germany and then to the U.S.A. where he conducted a vicious campaign against People's Poland. After Gomulka's return to power, Hrabyk returned to Poland. He is still an open anti-Semite and admirer of Pilsudski.

ENRYK H. JABLONSKI. A former leader of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party), Minister of Higher Education. At present, he is an alternate member of the new Politburo reorganized by Gierek. Historian of the Polish labor movement.

WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI, General, Minister of Defense, approved and tolerated anti-Semitic campaign in the armed forces. In December, 1970, became alternate member of the Politburo. Aligned with Gierek against Moczar.

PAWEL JASIENICA, essayist and historian. He criticized Gomulka's cultural policies at the Polish Writers Union meeting in February, 1968. He was viciously attacked by Gomulka in his infamous speech of March 19, 1968 and was prohibited from publishing. All his books were removed from libraries and bookstores. He died in 1970. His funeral became an anti-Gomulka demonstration.

STEFAN KISIELEWSKI, prominent writer and composer, leader of progressive Catholics, a member of the Polish Parliament. He defended the students in March 1968, and was slandered by Gomulka in a March 19, 1968, speech and physically assaulted by Moczar's thugs on one of the main streets in Warsaw.

ZENON KLISZKO. Gomulka's closest adviser and collaborator, main ideologist of PZPR. He resigned from the Politburo in December, 1970, together with Gomulka. He shares the responsibility for the anti-Semitic campaign unleashed in March, 1968.

GRZEGORZ KORCZYNSKI, fought in the Civil War in Spain, participated in the French anti-Nazi resistance movement. Joined the Polish partisan movement in 1942. In 1950 he was arrested and sentenced to prison for murdering Jewish partisans during the war. In 1956, he was rehabilitated by Gomulka and later coopted to the Central Committee of PZPR. In 1968, Gen. Korczynski was the main organizer of the anti-Semitic campaign in the Polish armed forces.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, the most prominent contemporary Polish philosopher, author of a profound study on Baruch Spinoza and many other books, professor of philosophy at the Warsaw University. He was expelled from PZPR in October, 1966, for a speech on the tenth anniversary of the so-called "Polish October" in which he criticized the Gomulka leadership. He was removed from his university position in March, 1968, for defending the student demonstrations and for his condemnation of anti-Semitism. As a non-Jew, he received a regular Polish passport, lectured on philosophy at McGill and Berkeley Universities and is now at Oxford, England.

IGNACY KRASICKI, prominent journalist, at present correspondent of "Zycie Warszawy" in Italy. In summer 1968, plagiarized Otto Heller's famous book, "Der Untergang Des Judentums" (published in Vienna, 1931) and made it into a viscious anti-Semitic pamphlet.

J. ARON LEWARTOWSKI, member of the pre-war Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland, Secretary of the Central Bureau of the Jewish Communists, representative of the Central Committee of PPR (Polish Workers Party) in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was killed by the Gestapo in 1942.

WLADYSLAW MACHEJEK, member of the Central Committee of PZPR, editor of "Zycie Literackie." A vicious, brazen anti-Semite. Under the Hitler occupation he collaborated in the Nazi "Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny." He was a member of the Moczar fraction in PZPR.

KAROL MODZELEWSKI, son of Communist leader, *Zygmunt Modzelewski*, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs of People's Poland. Assistant professor at Warsaw University. A leader of an opposition group in PZPR. Author of the famous "Open Letter to the Party" in which he prophetically foresaw the December, 1970 uprising of the Polish workers against the Gomulka leadership. Tried together with *Kuron* in 1965 and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Rearrested together with *Kuron* in March, 1968 and again sentenced to imprisonment. Heroic and revered leader of the Polish revolutionary youth.

ADAM MICKIEWICZ, 1798-1855. The greatest Polish poet. In his fight for Polish independence he accented the necessity of friendship to the Jews.

MIECZYSLAW MOCZAR, probably of Ukrainian descent. He fought as a partisan during the war, since then closely associated with Gomulka. Leading member of the Political Police. It is suspected that he, together with Szlachcic, the present Minister of Interior, provoked the Kielce program in 1946. Open anti-Semite. Leader of the powerful organization of the former combatants ZBOWID. Former Minister of Interior. Had tactical differences with Gomulka. Deliberately provoked student demonstrations in March, 1968, in order to unleash anti-Semitic campaign and seize power. Finally succeeded as an ally of Gierek to become a full member of the Politburo. The sinister man of Polish politics, the main rival of Gierek.

ZENON NOWAK, a pre-war member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland. A fanatical Stalinist. Leader of Natolin faction in PZPR. Originated policies of removing Jews from Party and State cadres. At present, head of the Control Commission of PZPR.

EDWARD OCHAB. A prominent pre-war Polish Communist, one of the organizers of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union, member of the Politburo. First Secretary of the PZPR from March to October, 1956. President of Poland from 1964-1968, resigned from all offices as a protest against the anti-Semitic policies of Gomulka and Moczar.

BOLESLAW PIASECKI, the evil genius of Polish anti-Semitism. Pre-war fascist, continued under the Hitler occupation to murder Jews and Communists as a member of a partisan delegation in Moscow during the war. Released under condition of collaboration which he carries out faithfully up to the present. He never ceased to proclaim his anti-Semitism openly and his loyalty to his pre-war convictions. He was permitted to build up a financial empire in Poland and is head of the "Pax," organization.

ALEKSANDER PRYSTOR. Premier of the fascist Polish government, 1931-1933. Authorized the law to forbid Jewish ritual slaughter, a law that Gierek applied in Silesia when he was regional Party secretary under the Gomulka regime.

ADAM RAPACKI, former activist of PPS, member of the Politburo of PZPR from 1948-1968, minister of Foreign Affairs, 1956-1968. Author of the famous Rapacki Plan — atom-free zone in Europe (U. N. Session, 1957). Resigned from the Politburo in 1968 and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

1968 as a protest against the anti-Semitic campaign conducted by the Gomulka leadership. Died in 1970.

KAZIMIERZ RUSINEK, prominent pre-war anti-Communist trade union leader. During the war was a Kapo, who cruelly tortured his fellow prisoners. At present, a member of the Central Committee of PZPR and General Secretary of ZBOWID. One of the main organizers of the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign.

KAZIMIERZ SIDOR, before the war active in the Peasant Party, fought together with Moczar in the partisan movement, made anti-Semitic statements as a member of a partisan delegation in Moscow during the war. Ambassador of People's Poland in Cairo. Author of anti-Semitic book "Revolution under the Pyramids." In June, 1970, published a series of anti-Jewish articles on "Zionist Tkotskyites."

ANTONI SLONIMSKI, famous writer and poet, head of the Literature Department of UNESCO in 1946-1948. Son of a converted Jew, was singled out by Gomulka in his March 19, 1968 speech as an example of a "cosmopolitan connected with Zionist plotters."

ARNOLD SLUCKI, known writer and poet of Jewish descent. In Israel since 1968.

JERZY SZTACHELSKI, former minister of higher education, former member of the Central Committee of PZPR. Opposed to the anti-Semitic policies of Gomulka and Moczar.

TADEUSZ WALICHNOWSKI, former police official, former head of the Jewish Department of the Ministry of Interior. One of Moczar's literary agents and author of vicious anti-Semitic books which he openly popularized anti-Jewish insinuations by an Austran Nazi, Dr. Franz Scheidl. These books are still published and distributed in the U.S.A. by the "Glos Ludowy" in Detroit.

ANDRZEJ WERBLAN, active before the war in the Polish Socialist Party (P. P. S.), the son of a Polish settler in Western Ukraine, deported by Soviet authorities to the northern regions of the Soviet Union. Later joined the Polish army. In People's Poland a member of the United Workers Polish Party (PZPR), one of Gomulka's closest collaborators. At present a member of the Central Committee, head of the Department of Science and Education. Author of the infamous article about "too many Jews" in the pre-war Communist movement. Talented careeist, always expressing the views of Gomulka and Kliszko. He became lately the Vice President of the Sejm (Parliament).

LEON WIENIAWSKI, Pre-war Jewish Communist. Spent many years in Pilsudski's prisons. In People's Poland published a book, "Youth Behind Bars." At present residing in Israel.

STANISLAW WYGADZKI, famous writer of Jewish descent, author of many very popular novels, short stories and poems. Left for Israel, December, 1967.

STEFAN ZOLKIEWSKI, Professor at Warsaw University. Criticized Gomulka's policies at the July, 1968 Central Committee plenum. Expelled from the Central Committee in November, 1968, on the eve of the Fifth Congress of the PZPR.